

February 1997

SESAME STREET MAGAZINE SECTION ONE OF ONE

CTW

A Sweet Valentine's  
Day Meal (See page 64)

# SESAME STREET PARENTS™

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES SECTION

## Winter fun!

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Little Hands

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# Why do simple moments make such strong memories? EDITOR'S NOTE

## Magic of the Mundane

**W**ALKING AND TALKING—THAT'S ALL MY FATHER AND I WERE DOING. On a sunny autumn day years ago, the two of us moved down the quiet streets of our suburban community, speaking just a little as we headed to religious services. My dad and I took those walks only a few times each year, when his restaurant was closed and we could spend time alone together. Nothing remarkable ever happened during these journeys—no dramatic events, no life-changing discussions. But to this day I can recall the emotions that were so alive in me as we walked. I felt that I was important to him, that we had a special connection, that he was listening to me...and that he loved me.

I haven't really discussed the significance of those times with anyone. So it surprised me to discover rather similar memories coming from a number of the writers in this Family Activities issue of *Sesame Street Parents*.

You'll read about one of those moments in Sonia Taitz's lovely introduction to her piece about parent-child field trips ("It's a Date!"). You'll experience another in Linda Bernstein's sweet recollection of childhood snowstorms ("Snow Days"). And the joy of doing simple things together shows up again in Jenny Hart Danowski's short, helpful article ("Getting Into the Activity Act").

Of course, many of the moments kids spend with parents aren't particularly special; after all, we are talking about real people and real life. But something wonderful happened for so many of us during those "alone together" times, and I can't help but think there's a lesson in that for every parent.

Enjoy the issue.

*Ira Wolfman*

IRA WOLFMAN, EDITOR IN CHIEF



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*"When it's winter, the best thing  
is rolling around in the snow."  
—Shaquar Supreme Tannis, three years old*

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Cover photograph 1997 Jaroslaw Hirniak.

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# Our readers talk back LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Friendship Woes

I agree with Antonia van der Meer ["First Friendships," October 1996] that friends are important in a child's life. However, I wish she had also mentioned that some friendships can be unhealthy. My three-year-old son plays with a child who encourages him to behave badly, and I was hoping to find some suggestions in the article on how to handle the situation.

Ruth Doyle  
Washington, IN

**Editor's note:** In a future issue, *Practical Parenting* will feature readers' suggestions on how to handle difficult friendships.

## Reading to Children

I agree that reading to school-age children is terrific fun ["Reading Together," Elementary Years, October 1996]. It's a way for my children to stay turned on to books and their limitless possibilities, and a way for

me to revisit classics like Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House series and Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*. Also, I think that exposing children to challenging books encourages them to keep working on their reading skills.

Lynne Benzion  
Gaithersburg, MD

## Let Them Eat Cake! (Sometimes)

I can't go along with Dr. Balter's suggestion that dessert be given to children even if they don't eat their dinner ["Supertime Struggles," On Discipline, October 1996]. In my household, my 4½-year-old daughter gets dessert only if she has eaten her main meal. It is a parent's responsibility to teach good eating habits; permitting a child to skip a healthy dinner does not effectively do so.

Christina McIntosh  
Rolla, MS

## Only Children

Thank you for Lucy Emerson Sullivan's article "Our One and Only" [Personally Speaking, October 1996]. There are wonderful advantages to being an only child; I was one, and wouldn't have changed a thing.

Today, I wonder if I give my two boys the same amount of attention that I received growing up, and I'm envious that the author can devote herself entirely to her son. But I am also aware that there are benefits to having siblings, and I wouldn't trade my precious sons, and their energy, for anything!

Michele Smith  
Spring, TX

Ms. Sullivan does larger families an injustice in "Our One and Only." As the mother of three children, I enjoy a closeness with all my kids. Granted, my attention must be divided. But my love isn't; it's multiplied!

Laura Slaughter-Endres  
Baltimore, MD

## Monster Muppets

"Meet the Monsters" [Sesame Street Beat, October 1996] was very enjoyable. I am a huge fan of Elmo and Zoe; recently, I even named my kitten Zoe. Thanks, and keep up the great work!

Erica Dougherty  
Greenville, NC

## The Great Muppet Vote

The September 1996 issue of *Sesame Street Magazine* ran a poll asking your children to name their favorite *Sesame Street* Muppet. Now it's your turn! Answer the questions below and return the survey to us. Poll results will be printed in our July/August 1997 issue.

 <input type="checkbox"/> Baby Bear	 <input type="checkbox"/> Benny the Bunny	 <input type="checkbox"/> Bert	 <input type="checkbox"/> Betty Lou	 <input type="checkbox"/> Big Bird
 <input type="checkbox"/> Cookie Monster	 <input type="checkbox"/> Count von Count	 <input type="checkbox"/> Elmo	 <input type="checkbox"/> Ernie	 <input type="checkbox"/> Grover
 <input type="checkbox"/> Kingston Livingston III	 <input type="checkbox"/> Natasha	 <input type="checkbox"/> Oscar the Grouch	 <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie Dawn	 <input type="checkbox"/> Rosita
 <input type="checkbox"/> Slimey	 <input type="checkbox"/> Snuffy	 <input type="checkbox"/> Telly	 <input type="checkbox"/> Zoe	(Write the name here.) <input type="checkbox"/> Other

1. Who is your favorite Muppet? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did you watch *Sesame Street* when you were growing up? yes ☐ no ☐  
If so, who was your favorite Muppet then? \_\_\_\_\_

Send completed questionnaires to:

Muppet Poll  
Sesame Street Parents  
P.O. Box 3248  
Wallington, NJ 07057-3248

Responses must be postmarked by  
February 2, 1997.

We welcome letters from our readers.

Write to:

*Sesame Street Parents*,  
One Lincoln Plaza, New York, NY 10023

E-mail letters to [ssp.letters@ctw.org](mailto:ssp.letters@ctw.org),  
or fax them to 212-875-6105.

Include your address and  
daytime phone number.

Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

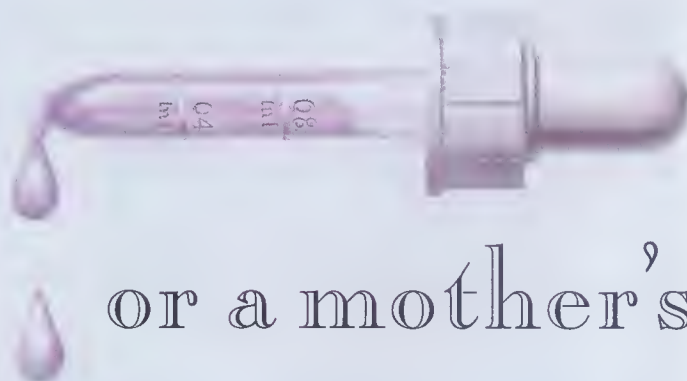
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# Why the show tickles everybody's funny bone SESAME STREET BEAT

BY P. J. TANZ

## What's So Funny?

**A**RE YOU AND YOUR PRESCHOOLER laughing yourselves silly over *Sesame Street* this season? If you've wondered how the show always manages to touch the funny bones of both kids and their parents, this interview with Lou Berger, the show's new head writer, an eight-year *Sesame Street* veteran, and the man who introduced the popular Baby Bear to the Street, explains it all.

### What's so funny about *Sesame Street*?

**Lou Berger:** For one thing, it's the Muppets' silliness. They live in a different physical world than we do: They bounce, they hang, they go through walls without getting hurt. Think about how startling it is to see the Muppets for the first time or to watch an 8-foot-tall bird who has a best friend the size of an elephant. Think about Cookie Monster, whose huge appetite touches every part of his life. His obsession is always fresh, always new, and always funny.

Having human characters pulled into ridiculous Muppet situations also brings in a lot of humor. When Prairie Dawn presents a pageant about vegetables, it's silly to see Telly in a celery costume, but it's even funnier if Maria is coerced to dress up like a piece of broccoli!

And finally, there's an element of parody that parents enjoy. Children watching *Hamlet* on Monsterpiece Theatre laugh at the fact that Cookie Monster loves the play because Hamlet is Danish and Cookie Monster loves eating danish. Meanwhile, parents laugh at the Shakespeare parody.

### Street Scenes

Imagine a whole week of television that's good for you! Fasten your seat belts for *Sesame Street's* Health and Safety week (February 17–21). The skinny on the five episodes is that they'll teach you and your preschooler everything you need to know about healthy living. And two thumbs up for the episode on February 17, in which Baby Bear tells how he gave up thumb sucking.

Dates are subject to change. Check your local listings.

### Why is *Sesame Street's* appeal to parents so important?

**L.B.:** *Sesame Street* is a less passive experience if a parent and child watch together. And even if a preschooler understands the jokes on a different level, he'll feel good laughing at the same show his parents do.

### Big Bird Tip of the Month



This month's *Sesame Street Magazine* is a special Winter Fun With Elmo issue, featuring you-know-who. To read more about the season, check out the following books:

***Snowballs***, written and illustrated by Lois Ehlert (HarBrace Juvenile Books). (Age 3 and older)

***Winter Wood***, written and illustrated by David Spohn (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard). (Ages 2–5) —Judith Rovenger

*Sesame Street* is known for its blend of education and entertainment. How do the writers achieve this balance?

**L.B.:** While every script must meet one of the show's many curriculum goals, like cooperation or conflict resolution, the writers' main objective is to create an episode that's as entertaining as possible.

Once a script is finished, the *Sesame Street* research department will evaluate whether or not the episode teaches a



Baby Bear with one of his favorite humans, head writer Lou Berger.

curriculum goal, and if there is any way the teaching can be reinforced.

### How do you get into kids' minds to make them laugh?

**L.B.:** We don't! *Sesame Street's* writers focus on writing episodes they'd like to watch, and, at the same time, remain aware that they're writing for kids. And that's how we produce a show for preschoolers that doesn't talk down to them.

### Over the years *Sesame Street* has addressed serious topics with grace and humor. When is humor not appropriate on the show?


**L.B.:** An episode can be funny without playing down the importance of an issue, but we're also not afraid to do a show that doesn't depend on a laugh. We did a beautifully written episode by former head writer Norman Stiles, for instance, in which Big Bird learns about Mr. Hooper's death.

When we do a highly dramatic episode, we remember that many young viewers are hearing about the topic for the first time. This doesn't mean that we talk down to kids; instead, we're careful about how we present the information to them.

### Why make *Sesame Street* funny?

**L.B.:** Because it's better than watching a show that isn't! ■

P. J. Tanz, assistant editor of *Sesame Street Parents*, admits that the Muppets still make her laugh.



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How does your family prepare for dining in restaurants?

# PRACTICAL PARENTING

EDITED BY VICKI LANSKY

## Let's Eat Out!

**T**aking young children out to eat in restaurants requires some thought and preparation, but it gives your kids the opportunity to learn from an adult environment, taste new foods, and practice social graces. It can be true quality time for the family if you have reasonable expectations for your children's behavior. These tips should help make eating out with your kids a piece of cake! —V.L.

Since our four-year-old son, Danny, doesn't have much of an appetite, we talk about the menu on our way to the restaurant so he can think about what he would like to eat. We also encourage him to order for himself; this adds to his anticipation of the meal.

*Dawn Burfeind  
Sicklerville, NJ*

We don't expect our children (ages one, five, and eight) to sit patiently while waiting for their food. After everyone's ordered, my husband or I take them for a walk outside or around the restaurant.

*Laura Siegel  
Livingston, NJ*

I take my "survival bag" everytime we eat out with Sara, age four, and Zachary, age two. The bag contains crayons, markers, stickers, paper, a coloring book, and some small toys. I also pack a couple of healthy, light snacks to give to the kids while we wait for our food.

*Jennifer Mason  
Rockville, MD*

Our children eat a light snack before we go out to dinner. This way my husband and I don't have to contend with overly hungry, distracted kids, and we all can relax and enjoy our meal.

*Renee Vesperman  
Lancaster, WI*

We always try to go early and beat the crowds when we take our children, ages five and two, out to eat. The servers are more helpful, and we receive our meals quickly. Because the kids are excited, they don't eat much, so sometimes we have them share a meal.

*Pamela Schneider  
Newbury Park, CA*

To prevent our kids from wandering around the restaurant, we seat them on the inside of a booth or at a table near a wall. We also bring our own plastic cups with lids (to prevent spills) and our own child-size silverware. Grown-up utensils can be unwieldy for a child's small hands.

*Robin Mitchell  
Kingsville, TX*



Through pretend restaurant play at home, our children Jake, age five, and Kara, age three, have learned about acceptable dinner behavior. Then, when we go out to eat, we always use examples from our role-playing to review with them how they should behave.

*Lisa Checkur  
Sussex, NJ*

We take our children to noisy restaurants that have a bustling staff and an open kitchen where you can see food being prepared. This gives the kids something interesting to watch, and they don't feel as pressured to be quiet.

*Nancy Rosso  
Lafayette, CA*

Our family treat is to dine in restaurants that offer a buffet table. This way we don't have to order food and then wait for

service. Also, our daughters enjoy selecting what they want to eat, and going back for seconds, if they like.

*Debbie Chuha  
Chardon, OH*

*Vicki Lansky is the author of many parenting and household hints books, including 101 Ways to Spoil Your Grandchild (Contemporary Books) and Trouble-Free Travel With Children (Book Peddlers).*

**Share your ideas! Respond to the following question:**

**What do you do if you dislike one of your child's friends?**

Send your answers, including your address and your child's age, or any questions you'd like answered in future columns to:

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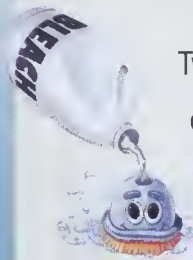
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## REWARDING RITUALS

**T**he end of the holiday season doesn't have to mean an end to your family's rituals. "They are the glue that holds families together," says Diane Ross Glazer, Ph.D., a psychologist in private practice in Santa Monica, California, who helps families develop their own rituals. Any family event that you enjoy and do regularly, from apple picking in the fall to a fancy Sunday dinner, can become a ritual.

"The beauty of rituals," Dr. Glazer says, "is that there are no rules. Any events that

feel special to your family are rituals." And, she adds, "they are especially beneficial for blended families and single parents wishing to define their unique family unit."

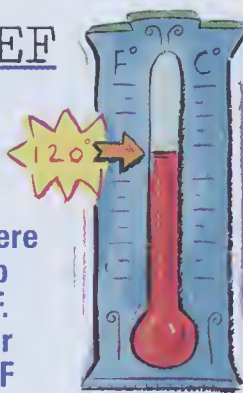
Building a snowman together every winter can become an anticipated yearly event.



## IN BRIEF

**One second. That's how long it takes for a child to receive a severe burn when tap water is 159°F. Set your water heater at 120°F or lower.**

Source: National Safety Council.



Air bags are made for adults (above); kids should be properly buckled into the backseat only.

## SAFETY ALERT

### AIR BAG WARNING

**B**y now most parents know that air bags, which can save adult lives, can be deadly for kids. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is trying to do something about it. They have convinced the U.S. Department of Transportation to ask auto makers to install warning labels, phase in smart air bags (which can sense the height and

weight of a passenger), consider reducing the force of air bag deployment, install on-off switches for passenger-side air bags in cars with no backseat, and consider allowing individuals or dealers to deactivate air bags. In the meantime, however, "the safest place for children is in the backseat, properly buckled up," says Ricardo Martinez, M.D., the administrator of the NHTSA.

## EARLY AMNIOS! TOO RISKY?

**P**reliminary research on first-trimester amniocentesis suggests there may be some risks associated with the early test. More than 300 women, all over the age of 35, underwent an amniocentesis between their eleventh and fourteenth weeks of pregnancy; a control group had the procedure performed at the standard time, between the sixteenth and nineteenth week.

Women who had the test earlier in their pregnancies were 11 times more likely to experience fetal loss within 30 days following the procedure than were those in the control group, reports researcher Cynthia Brumfield, M.D., associate professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. They were also more likely to suffer amniotic fluid leakage and vaginal bleeding—both potentially serious complications—than were women who had the test at the sixteenth week or beyond.

Dr. Brumfield recommends further research on a much larger group, to determine whether the early amnio is the culprit, or whether these miscarriages might have happened anyway. (The majority of miscarriages occur in the first trimester.) Until then, she advises women who desire the procedure to discuss it with their health care provider, and, if they decide to go ahead with it, to request that the test be done by a highly experienced physician. ►

# Continued NEWSBRIEFS



## NANCY AND JAMES CHUDA

### ENVIRONMENTAL CRUSADERS FOR KIDS

**F**ew parents worked harder than Nancy and James Chuda of Los Angeles to keep their child safe from environmental toxins.

James, an environmental architect, and Nancy, an environmental activist, bought organic fruits and vegetables. Nancy made her own baby food and volunteered with an organization devoted to limiting pesticide use in produce. So it was a cruel irony that in 1990, the couple's then-four-year-old daughter, Colette, was diagnosed with Wilm's tumor, a rare, nongenetic form of cancer that has been linked to pesticide exposure. Colette died one year later at age five.

Realizing that even the most



James and Nancy Chuda (above) were spurred into action by the death of their daughter, Colette (right).

conscientious parents can't always shield their children from pollutants, the Chudas founded the Colette Chuda Environmental Fund in 1991. The organization's goal is to prove through research that children's cancer can be linked to environmental factors. In November 1995 the couple launched the Children's Health and Environmental Coalition (CHEC), a nonpartisan grassroots movement that pushes for national policies to protect children from toxins in the environment.

The organization has gained national recognition and the ear of politicians, including U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer from California. In September



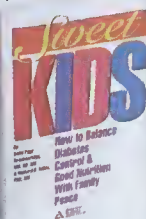
1996 Senator Boxer introduced a bill in Congress that guarantees families the right to know about environmental pollutants. The bill also offers a new standard for measuring the risk that environmental toxins pose to people, taking into account children's smaller, more vulnerable bodies. Partly as a result of the Chudas' efforts, the Environmental Protection Agency has recently adopted just such a standard for evaluating potential environmental toxins.

"Parents need to educate themselves so they can make wiser choices," says Nancy, pointing out that a single piece of fruit can be sprayed with more than five pesticides. Adds James: "We feel this issue has the capacity to galvanize the entire environmental movement." To find out more about CHEC, write to P.O. Box 846, Malibu, CA 90265, or call 310-573-9608.

Gail Rosenblum is a Minneapolis-based writer and editor. She is the mother of a seven-year-old daughter and a five-year-old son.

## KIDS WITH DIABETES

**F**or parents tired of being "food police," there's help for managing the diets of children with diabetes. Look for *Sweet Kids: How to Balance Diabetes Control & Good Nutrition With Family Peace* by Betty Page Brackenridge and Richard R. Rubin (American Diabetes Association, \$14.95), or call 800-ADA-ORDER.



## NEW DEFENSE AGAINST BIRTH DEFECTS

**T**hanks to a new U.S. Food and Drug Administration ruling, starting January 1, 1998, most grain products, including bread, pasta, flour, and rice, will be fortified with folic acid, a B vitamin that reduces the risk of spina bifida, anencephaly, and other birth defects of the spine and brain. This is the first time in U.S. history that foods have been fortified in order to reduce the risk of birth defects.

About 2,500 infants are born each year with defects of the spine and brain. To combat this, all women of reproductive age are advised to consume at least 400 micrograms of folic acid daily. Foods naturally rich in folic acid include leafy dark green vegetables, citrus fruits and juices, kidney and lima beans, and liver. It's important to also take a daily multivitamin-mineral pill containing at least .4 milligrams of folic acid.

## WHERE'S MIKEY?

**R**emember the kid who actually *liked* the Life cereal his brothers foisted upon him? Well, Life is looking for a new "Mikey." This time out, Mikey can be a boy or a girl, aged 3 to 12 (as of January 1, 1997). Could your cutie be this generation's cereal-box icon? To find out, enter the Be the Next "Mikey" Contest between now and June 30, 1997. Who knows? Your child might win the \$10,000 prize, appear on cereal boxes, and, perhaps, star in a national commercial. (Check the cereal box for details.)





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Big relief for upset tummies.



# ON DISCIPLINE

BY LAWRENCE BALTER, PH.D.

## shy With Adults

**My four-year-old son refuses to speak to adults. If a grown-up addresses him, he gets nervous and looks at me. What can I do about this situation?**

**A**lthough you want your child to be polite to adults, don't pressure him to be friendly. At this stage, you should expect him to behave in a mannerly fashion, but not insist on his being sociable.

Many preschoolers become inhibited around adults, which is not in itself a reason for concern. (Remember, there are potential dangers in a child's being too trusting of adults.) Your youngster may simply be shy, a trait that is apparent in infancy and may be part of his temperament. Here are some ways to help your son cope:

**Familiarize your child with grown-ups.** Encourage him to spend time with adults he knows and likes, such as grandparents or a playmate's parents. Try arranging more family visits and playdates to increase his level of comfort with these adults.

**Express your expectations.** Before an event where adults will be present, let your son know in advance how you'd like him to behave. You might say, "Today Aunt Mary is coming for a visit. When she gets here, you only have to say hello and shake her hand. Then you can go play." You

might even rehearse this with him to ease his nervousness.

**Encourage social skills.** Parental modeling is an effective way to teach children how to behave around adults. Instruct your son to follow your lead during social events. When he makes an effort in situations that you know are difficult for him, be sure to compliment his behavior.

Although your son might not become demonstrative

toward adults right away, with your guidance he can develop skills that will enable him to behave appropriately.



**Send questions about your child's behavior, including your child's age, to:**

**Dr. Balter on Discipline  
Sesame Street Parents  
One Lincoln Plaza  
New York, NY 10023**

**Or fax them to 212-875-6105.**

**We regret that unpublished questions cannot be answered individually.**

## Time for Time-outs?

**I've tried using time-outs with my three-year-old when she misbehaves. She responds by screaming, "You're a mean Mommy," and throwing her toys. What am I doing wrong?**

**I**t is common for children to react angrily to parents' limit-setting. Your daughter's behavior is normal.

That said, it's important to keep some things in mind about time-outs. First, a time-out is a way to stop your child's misbehavior. It also deprives her of attention. Finally, it gives you a chance to cool down.

In many families, however, time-outs have become just

another, often ineffective, form of punishment. For instance, I have heard parents say, "Go to your chair and think about what you've done. When you're ready, you can rejoin us." It's too much to ask a small child to reflect on his actions when he's angry about being isolated from others.

If your daughter expresses anger when you require her to take a time-out, remain calm. Say something like, "I know

you're upset, but you're getting a time-out because ..." Ignore her objections and tell her she can return to her activities once she has quieted down.

For time-outs to be effective, there are several rules of thumb. The child should know in advance that a time-out will be the consequence of misbehavior. A time-out should occur immediately and be



brief, lasting no longer than three minutes. You might use a kitchen timer to show your child when her time-out will end. Also, choose a quiet area for time-out purposes. The idea is to defuse the problem by removing the child from the situation.

Remember that rewarding good behavior can work just as well as punishing bad behavior. So when your daughter behaves appropriately, praise her and reward her with a special privilege, such as an extra story at bedtime. ■

*Dr. Lawrence Balter is the author of Who's in Control? Dr. Balter's Guide to Discipline Without Combat (Fireside).*

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Walt Disney  
HOME VIDEO



# Books, music, software, and video picks REVIEWERS' CHOICE

## Books

There's a special joy in sharing winter stories with your children. They'll love hearing about the wildness outside, while they're cozy at home.

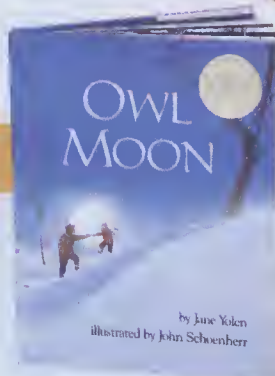
**The Brave Ones** by Tony Kerins. *Candlewick Press*. Five toy animals are marching home through the woods. They are the brave ones, unlike Little Clancy, the toy turtle who's safe at home. They say they aren't afraid of the wind ("Woo! Woo!") or the twigs and branches ("Crack! Crack!"). When the toy animals reach home, they snuggle up together in front of the television. Suddenly, Little Clancy toots his tiny horn and gives them a terrible scare. Your child will enjoy the adventure, but he'll particularly relish the little toy's power to make such a fearful noise. (Ages 2-4)

## For Little Ones

**The Snowy Day** by Ezra Jack Keats. *Viking Children's Books, hardcover and board book; Puffin, paper.*

This classic story of a city boy's wonder at a snowfall, originally published in 1962, is now also available in a small board book for very young readers.

When Peter wakes up and looks through the window, he finds that snow covers everything he sees. He puts on his snowsuit and runs outside to discover an astonishing world in his street. Ezra Jack Keats's simple pictures in glowing color reveal the magic of a world transformed. (Ages 1-4)



One of John Schoenherr's Caldecott Medal-winning illustrations from *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen.

**It's Snowing! It's Snowing!** by Jack Prelutsky, illustrated by Jeanne Titherington. *Greenwillow Books*. Your child will join in and act out these funny rhyming poems about the playful nonsense of falling around in the snow. The soft-toned pictures express the silliness and the feeling of being bundled up "in tons of winter clothes." After reading this book, everyone can go outside in the cold to shiver and chant "I Am Freezing!": "There are glaciers in my stomach, there is sleet inside my bones, I am colder than the contents of a million ice-cream cones." (Ages 2-5)

**Owl Moon** by Jane Yolen, illustrated by John Schoenherr. *Philomel*. Under a bright moon, late one night when the wind is still, a small girl and her father go out in the snowy woods. Then Pa calls to the owls and, amazingly, a huge one comes and lands on a branch. Owl and humans stare at one another before the bird flies away. John Schoenherr's watercolors evoke the mystery of the night. Children will understand how the unspoken bond between the girl and Pa is made even more special by their adventure on a winter's night. (Ages 4-8)

**Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening** by Robert Frost, illustrated by Susan Jeffers. *Dutton Children's Books*. Most of us were first introduced to Robert Frost's classic winter poem in elementary school. But this edition brings the beautiful haunting lines to even younger children.

Susan Jeffers's illustrations, mostly black and white with just a touch of color, leave space for your child to imagine the man and his horse alone in the woods with birds and deer and other wild creatures. We hear the silence, feel the patterns of "easy wind and downy flake," and, when the man returns to houses and people, see that he has "promises to keep." (Ages 3-8)

Hazel Rochman is an editor of *Booklist* and the author of *Against Borders: Promoting Books for a Multicultural World* (ALA/Booklist).

## Picks for Parents

**365 Days of Baby Love: Playing, Growing, and Exploring With Babies From Birth to Age 2** by Sheila Ellison and Susan Ferdinandi. *Sourcebooks*; \$12.95. I wish I'd had this book during the early months of motherhood, when I was desperate to entertain my hyperalert and cranky-when-bored daughter. It's filled with suggestions for projects and games that will delight both babies and young children. The activities range from the basic (wrapping a baby's favorite toys in tissue so she can have the joy of unwrapping them) to the elaborate (a plan to design wallpaper, using family photos). I especially like the many tips that were gathered from parents, detailing how to do things like getting crayon marks off wallpaper. And I appreciate that the book's emphasis isn't just on keeping a child busy, but on helping Mom, Dad, and baby discover one another.

**PLEASE NOTE** The age recommendation for each item is based on our reviewers' judgment and may not correspond to the age range suggested by the publisher or manufacturer.

**The KIDFUN Activity Book: New Expanded Edition for Ages 2½ to 8** by Sharla Feldscher and Susan Lieberman. *HarperPerennial*; \$13. Now that Melissa, my (still tireless) daughter, is a preschooler,

## Continued REVIEWERS' CHOICE

this book satisfies a new need: How to keep her engaged (and tantrum free) in everyday but trying situations, such as being around Mom or Dad when they have to work. There are more than 400 activities listed here, all of them simple, but many also quite clever. For instance, I'd never thought of keeping Melissa occupied in my office by offering paper, pencil, and the contents of a desk drawer, and suggesting she trace whatever she finds.

*Carol Lynn Mithers, a Los Angeles-based writer, works whenever Melissa lets her.*

### Videos

**Baby's First Impressions: Letters** *Small Fry Productions, 800-521-5311; 32 minutes; \$12.95.* A crew of appealing and unaffected children will introduce your baby to letters in this highly effective, colorful video. The ABCs are clearly spoken by a gentle female voice, and objects are frequently shown against simple, colored backdrops. The video's light-hearted feel and uncluttered look are sure to engage your baby. Six other volumes in the Baby's First Impressions series, including *Shapes* and *Colors*, are also available, but *Letters* is the most effective of these. (Ages 1-3)

**The Magic School Bus: Blows Its Top** *KidVision, 800-3-KID-VID; 30 minutes; \$12.95.* Through lively, animated adventures, the popular Magic School Bus series introduces youngsters to surprisingly complex science-oriented subjects. In this episode, the magical school teacher Ms. Frizzle uses her fantastic yellow bus to take her students on a trip to explore the geological structure of the earth

and to see an island being formed. When an undersea volcano starts erupting, everyone is spewed out along with the hot lava that forms the island. Though the information is aimed at 6- to 11-year-olds, preschoolers enjoy the series, too. (Age 4 and older)

*Fiona Zippan and Doug Atkinson are the authors of Videos for Kids (Prima).*

choices. A treasure chest contains games and activities, each with three levels of difficulty. The simplest versions are suitable for younger children, who can connect dots to create constellations in the sky, or make silly outfits by mixing and matching clothes. Children can also watch music videos and sing along, or click on noisemakers to hear their sounds. The text is available in English or Spanish. (Ages 3-7)

**Colorforms Saban's Power Rangers ZEO and Colorforms Sailor Moon and Her Sailor Scouts** *Gryphon Software, 800-795-0981; Windows/Mac CD-ROM; \$29.* These latest offerings in a series of Colorforms Computer Fun Sets don't offer your child the tactile pleasure of peeling and placing the three-dimensional version's plastic pieces. But the electronic model does allow children to change the size and color of the pieces, and to move them around to produce sounds. There are 12 different background scenes; you can also combine Colorforms programs for a larger selection of stick-ons and backgrounds. So much to do! Your child will play happily with these sets for hours. (Ages 3-9)

*Joshua Mills writes frequently about computers and software. Lisa deMauro is a children's book writer. They have two children.*

### Music

**Big Blues: Blues Music for Kids** *Various artists; Music for Little People, 800-727-2233; CD, \$15.98; cassette, \$9.98.* An all-star bluesfest for families, the music on this recording is as fresh as anything you would expect to find on a favorite blues collection. But the songs have been chosen and written to be relevant to children's experiences and appealing to their imagination. Notable are "Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah," performed by the Fabulous Thunder-

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### Software

**The Sailor Dog** *Powerhouse Entertainment, 800-258-2088; Windows CD-ROM; \$29.95.* This interactive version of a Margaret Wise Brown story (originally published in 1953) offers a number of extras to go with the usual read-along and play-along



**NEW!**



WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

# TUNA MELT

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birds, "The Rainy Day Blues" by B. B. King, and "Waggy Tailed Dog" by Maria Muldaur. (Ages 2-6)

## Nora's Room

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9904; CD,

\$11.98;

cassette, \$9.98.

Jessica Harper

uses Caribbean and jazz

rhythms, rich harmonies, and

irresistible sing-along, dance-

along melodies in these funny, upbeat songs

about her kids. In the title piece, Harper is

the world's calmest mom as she croons,

"Crash, bang, crash bang boom./Some-

thing's going on in Nora's room." In "Bare-

foot Blues," she helps her child defuse the

anger and disappointment of forgetting a

pair of shoes. And that's just for starters.

Every song in this collection is a winner.

(Ages 2-6)

Jill Jarnow is the author of *All Ears: How to Choose and Use Recorded Music for Children* (Penguin Books).

## New From Children's Television Workshop

**Chelli Tyco Preschool, 800-488-8697; \$13.99.** Mol-

ly's general store isn't the only place you'll see

Chelli. Now you can find the patchwork canine

star of *Big Bag*, Children's Television Workshop's

new hit show for preschoolers (shown three times

a week on Cartoon Network), on your local toy

store shelves, too. The brightly colorful 11-inch

Chelli has a floppy-floppy, snuggle-up-against-

able body that kids will simply love. So will

Mom and Dad (believe me, I've been cuddling

mine). An 8-inch version will be available in the

spring. (Age 3 and up)

**Monster Melodies Sony Wonder; CD, \$13.98; cassette,**

**\$9.98.** It's definitely a monster's life on this rerelease of

some oldie-but-goodie *Sesame Street* tunes. Whether

it's Herry Monster singing about "That Furry Blue

Mommy of Mine," or Grover and friends growling "Be

Kind to Your Neighborhood Monsters," children will be

comforted to hear that other kids—and monsters—feel just the way they do about family,

friends, and the importance of doing things together. (All ages) —Linda Bernstein





For building a nest egg, nothing beats the 401(k)

# FAMILY FINANCE

BY JOHN WAGGONER

## The Best Way to Save



**H**ERE'S SOME ADVICE if your employer offers a 401(k) savings plan: Contribute every penny you can.

As more employers turn away from offering traditional pension plans, it's more important than ever to save for retirement in a 401(k). "It should be first on your list," urges Norma Severns of Armstrong, Welch & MacIntyre, a financial-planning firm in Washington, D.C. "Before looking at any other investment, put as much into your 401(k) as the government allows."

### HOW IT WORKS

Named after the section of the federal tax code that authorizes these plans, the 401(k) is an arrangement whereby your employer makes deductions from your paycheck and puts them into stocks, bonds, or other investments that you choose.

Intended for retirement, the fund normally must stay untouched until you reach age 59½. There is no legal minimum amount that you must invest, but there is an annual maximum, raised periodically for inflation; the 1997 cap is \$9,500.

The plan's great advantage is that your salary deductions are not taxed as income by the Internal Revenue Service. If your salary is \$40,000, for instance, and you invest \$2,000 over a calendar year, you will only owe income tax on \$38,000. Another benefit is that your earnings are not taxed until you start withdrawing money. By then you may be retired and in a lower tax bracket. And finally, to promote employee saving, many companies match their workers' contributions, at least in part. A typical

match might be 25 or 50 cents on every employee dollar, up to 6 percent of the person's annual salary.

Perhaps the only drawback to a 401(k) is that in order to withdraw early, you need a recognized reason of hardship (such as being threatened with foreclosure on your mortgage); otherwise, the money you take out is liable to a 10 percent penalty on top of the income tax that you'll have to pay. However, depending on your company's plan, you may be allowed to take a loan on your 401(k) without a penalty.

Deciding where to invest 401(k) funds isn't as tricky as it seems.

### HOW TO INVEST (AND HOW MUCH)

Even if you can only afford to contribute a small amount each week, it still pays to participate, says Lynn Brenner, the author of *Building Your Nest Egg*

With Your 401(k) (Investors Press). "Tiny contributions become meaningful over time," she explains.

Deciding where to invest your 401(k) funds isn't as tricky as it seems. Most plans give you many chances to shuffle money around. Here are the four basic choices:

**Guaranteed Investment Contracts** Usually known as GICs, these are certificates issued by insurance companies that promise to pay a specified (low) interest rate over a set period. There's usually

no risk involved—unless the insurance company gets into financial problems.

### Money-Market Funds

These buy short-term, high-quality interest-earning securities issued by corporations or by the U.S. Treasury. They are low-risk and low-yield investments.

### Bond Funds

This type of fund buys long-term securities issued by corporations or by the U.S. government. Bonds pay higher interest than money markets, but hold greater risk, too.

### Stock Funds

These buy stocks, which are shares of ownership in publicly held companies. Stocks offer opportunities for big gains—or losses—as their share prices rise and fall.

### CREATING YOUR PORTFOLIO

The types of investments you select should depend partly on how long you have before you retire and need the money. If you're in your thirties, consider investing largely in stocks: Higher-risk options are unbeatable for long-term gain. Over a 30-year period, stocks average an annual return of 10.6 percent (versus 7.6 percent for bonds and 6.7 percent for money market securities).

But keep in mind that despite high returns, stocks are also vulnerable to short-term loss. The rule of thumb is that the older you are, the more bonds or money-market funds you should have. Some experts advise putting 1 percent of your portfolio into bonds for each year of your age; for example, if you're 40, put 40 percent in bonds.

We've all heard that the Social Security system will be in deep trouble by the year 2030. Your best bet for a decent retirement is your 401(k). Use it. ■

*John Waggoner is a personal finance reporter for USA Today and a coauthor of the CD-ROM program Parents' Guide to Money (Quicken).*



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Knock out the cold,  
not the kid.

# It's a date!

Four special field trips for you and your child

BY SONIA TAITZ



**I**T WAS THE KIND OF DAY YOU know all too well. Between mopping the juice spills and paying the gas bill, there was Phoebe, three years old and tugging at my legs. Looking down at her round eyes, I remembered that we had a date. I'd promised to take her to "the forest," a nature trail minutes from our home. "Let's go right now," she said.

And so we ventured out into the world I'd been ignoring all day, just the two of us in the hushed quiet of snow, under the big gray sky, with the sound of our footsteps crunching together.

Afterward, the world inside was different. The laundry and the bills were there, the breakfast dishes, too, but as we drank our hot chocolate, I felt a new bond between us. My pink-cheeked child and I had shared something extraordinary; together we had gone out into the world and come back with a deeper capacity for appreciating it.

"Special outings provide a wonderful opportunity for parent and child to share experiences. After such a time with the parent—and it needn't take long, either—children feel loved and cherished," says Ross Campbell, M.D., associate professor of pediatrics



Alan Feinberg hosts (left to right) Ashley K. Sims, age six, Nadean Quiles, age seven, and Diana Acosta at a New York City firehouse.

and psychiatry at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine in Chattanooga.

Nature walks, during which you can look at frozen ponds that mirror the sky, offer enough wonders to a young child to qualify as this kind of outing. Indeed, dates with your child need not be extravagant trips to distant places. Each of us lives near something that will do just fine—a firehouse or police station, a library or small museum.

In the months and years to come, your child will carry with her more than the science or civics lesson. "Children will remember these trips as times when they felt

comfortable and happy with you," notes Dr. Campbell, who is also the author of *How to Really Love Your Child* (Victor Books).

The following are some ideas for trips that may spark both of your imaginations.

## The Fire Station

**W**hen we called the local fire station to see whether they could accommodate us, they were welcoming; children visit all year round, they said. (This is true in many stations across the country, so call yours and check on its policy.) On our





Anthony Rucco watches while the children take turns sitting in the fire engine.



Bob Meany demonstrates special breathing equipment to Nadean and Ashley.

## LEARNING at the FIRE STATION

- To make sure your child isn't intimidated by the visit, drive or walk by the fire station a few days before. That way the place will seem familiar to him, and he'll be more relaxed and better able to have a good time.
- When you get home, build your own firehouse out of empty milk cartons colored paper, tape, and glue. (A plastic drinking straw makes a terrific pole.) Encourage your child to put her toy fire engines inside the homemade station, and describe her trip to family and friends.



The sculpture garden at the Aldrich Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut, is a great place to romp.

visit, the firefighters pointed out the brass poles for sliding down, as well as many pairs of huge boots with pants already in them, suspenders hanging down. Phoebe got to sit in the engine, try on a firefighter's hat, and visit with Sparky, the resident dalmatian. At the end of the tour, we received a tip: "check to see if your home smoke detectors are working." Dr. Campbell notes that this kind of trip, which involves learning about the types of helpful work adults do in the community, gives children a sense that they are important and part of the world beyond the home.

## Museums

**K**ids shouldn't be limited to visiting *children's* museums; they can have a great time at adult museums, too. My children and I have great fun visiting the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art in Ridgefield,





Connecticut, where we make ourselves at home in the outdoor sculpture garden. We've also played a game in which we match titles to the works—a challenge even for adults (Which one is "Blue Party"? Which one is "Energetics/Orange"?). Phoebe devised her own names for the untitled ones, such as "Ice-Cream Mountain." Nowadays, many museums have trained volunteers to explain art to youngsters. And of course, parents can improvise a tour of their own: For instance, look for pictures that include animals, or mothers and children.

## LEARNING at the MUSEUM

- Take into account your child's latest interest—kittens, trains, rabbits, ballet dancers, and so on—and look for artwork that has those special creatures or objects in it.
- Let your child choose a postcard from the gift shop, and hang it in her room. After a few dates, she'll have her own museum!

## At the Farm

As every parent knows, children are often transfixed by animals. My three-year-old loves Muscoot Farm in Somers, New York. This working farm has a dairy barn, complete with three-legged stools, where cows are milked by hand and machine. Once a year, in the spring, the sheep are sheared, and there are occasional wool-spinning demonstrations. In midwinter there is "maple sugaring," when trees are tapped for their sap. Gabriel, my six-year-old, was thrilled to learn that the maple syrup he pours all over his stack of pancakes comes from trees.

If you look through the local parenting newspapers and ask around, you may very well find that there's a farm like Muscoot near you. Whatever the season, it will delight you and your child just to gaze at the huge pigs rooting around in their pen, the sheep snoozing in a woolly mound, the goats butting their horn stubs and gamboling away. At Muscoot, a bunch of show chickens, polka-dotted or peacock-bright, with ruffs around their ankles (do chickens have ankles?) commanded the most atten-



It's always fun to take a hayride through the fields when you visit a farm.

## LEARNING at the MUSEUM

- Before you go, ask your child to draw a picture of what she'll see. When you get home, have her draw what she actually did see. Then hang both drawings up side by side.
- After the trip, imitate your favorite animal (walk, noises, and all). Then ask your preschooler to do the same. Next, imitate the silliest animal, the smallest animal, and so on.



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tion from my family. (We laughed to see them scratch up clouds of dust and then leap back, surprised, to search for cracked corn. "Look there, chicken!" Phoebe prompted. "Gobble, gobble," she told the turkeys.) Some farms offer hayrides—a great excuse to cuddle your little one as you jingle through the trees.

## For a More Successful Trip

Here are some tips for a great date:

- **Make sure your child is well rested. If she's too cranky, postpone the date.**
- **Always call ahead. Check out hours and policies.**
- **Bring along snacks. Keep it light; don't weigh yourself down with supplies.**
- **Don't be too disappointed if the date doesn't turn out as planned. Just go home, relax, and try again.**

## The Local Public Library

**T**here are lots of great date opportunities at the library, such as reading groups that offer story hours. These are sometimes supplemented by special activities (cooking or crafts, for example) to augment the printed word. Paula Koz, a part-time resident of Tobyhanna, Pennsylvania, takes her five-year-old, Nadia, to the Sleepytime Story Hour at the Pocono Mountain Public Library. Children come to the events in their pajamas, bringing their favorite "snuggie toy," and listen to stories like Frank Asch's *Moondance* (Scholastic). Then craft materials are provided to extend the story (in this case stars, glue, and midnight-blue paper). "Nadia just loves that we do this together," says Koz. "No big brother, no baby-sitter. Just Mom, her stuffed dog Scamper, and her." Call your local library to see what they have to offer.

There is nothing kids enjoy more than learning about the world with their parents by their side. Your dates with your child



## LEARNING at the LIBRARY

■ When you check books out of the library, hold your own story hour at home. Don't forget to invite all your child's favorite stuffed animals.

■ Here's another perfect date opportunity: As soon as your child is old enough (check with your local public library for card-eligibility requirements), make a special trip to get him his own library card. Afterward, go out and celebrate.

may be short, and the destinations modest, but that's the point. We're teaching children that there is wonder and warmth all around us. This is a loving foundation to build and travel on in the years to come. ■

*Sonia Taitz, a mother of three and the author of Mothering Heights (Berkley Press), writes about parenting for many publications.*

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# Winter

BY JOAN NOVELLI





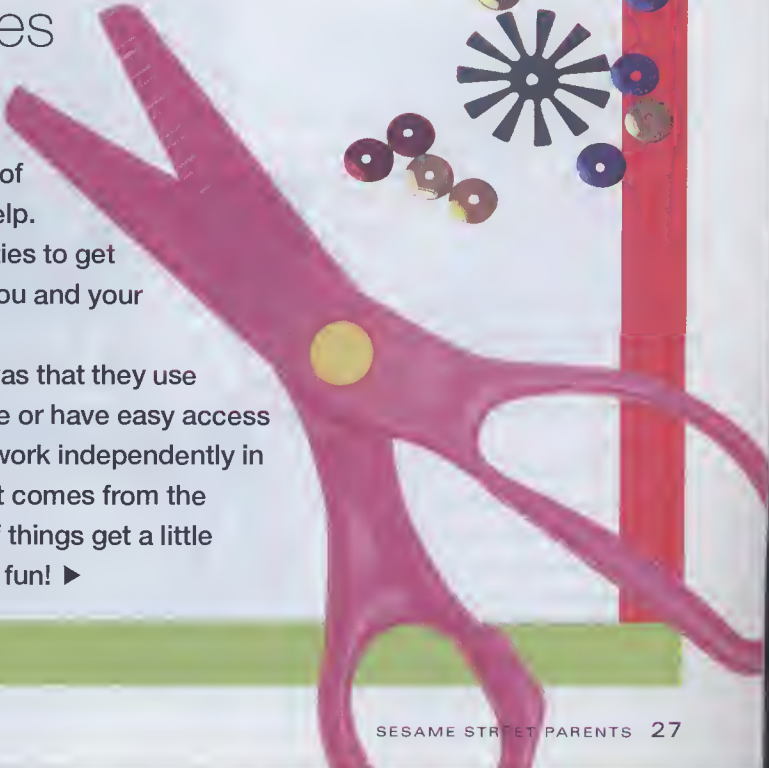
# Fun Grab Bag

Five creative activities for busy  
(but bored) little bees

**Y**ou know the kind of day:  
Your child just can't find  
anything to do, you've run out of  
suggestions, and you need help.

Here are some boredom-busting activities to get  
your creative juices flowing and keep you and your  
child entertained.

Our prerequisite for these activities was that they use  
inexpensive materials you have at home or have easy access  
to at a local store. Your youngster can work independently in  
some cases, but the real enjoyment comes from the  
togetherness. And don't worry if things get a little  
messy—just let loose and have fun! ►





1



2

## Let It Snow!

Here's how to make those familiar but magical paper snowflakes, plus an idea for creating a cool snowstorm indoors.

### What You Need

Paper  
Different-size round lids or bowls  
(the bigger, the better)  
Pencil  
Scissors  
Crayons, glitter, glue  
String, construction paper, clear  
contact paper (optional)

1. Help your child trace the lids or bowls on sheets of paper.
2. Cut out the circles.
3. Fold the circles in half, in quarters, and then in eighths; snip shapes out of the edges.
4. Unfold and color each snowflake.
5. Add glitter, the finishing touch.



3



4

### FOR MORE FUN

■ For a snowstorm effect, string a bunch of snowflakes together and dangle them in front of a window or from a doorway.

■ Another idea is to let your child glue the snowflakes to construction paper. Cover the construction paper with clear contact paper, and, voilà, you've created a personalized place mat!



5

## Getting Into the Activity Act

BY JENNY HART  
DANOWSKI

**M**Y FIVE-YEAR-OLD daughter, Taylor, is forever asking me to do arts and crafts with her. To be honest, fitting these activities into our hectic schedule isn't easy. Even when I find the time to work with her, I don't always stay focused on the project. And yet, as often as possible, I put other things aside so we can share in creative activities.

Over the years, Taylor and I have painted birdhouses, planted a garden, and even made simple "Welcome Home" posters for Daddy. "Sharing the excitement of discovery and creation with your child brings you closer," notes Susan K. Perry, Ph.D., the author of *Fun Time, Family Time* (Avon Books). In our afternoons spent coloring, gluing, and glittering, Taylor and I have learned a great deal about each other. And, of course, we've had a lot of fun!

What you make with your preschooler is less important than the quality of the time you spend together in the process. Here are six ways to make the most of it:

**Draw on your child's interests.** "If your preschooler lights up over a puppet show he sees at the mall, make puppets with him at home," suggests James Garbarino, Ph.D., director of the Family Life Development Center at Cornell. Introduce your youngster to a variety of activities and encourage him to try new things. "If you persist, a child often finds that he enjoys an activity that didn't appeal to him at first," Dr. Garbarino says. Even if your child wasn't interested in, say, making paper snowflakes last week, try again today. ►



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**Set up a work space that can get really messy.** Nothing kills a child's interest in a project faster than hearing "Don't make a mess" echoing in her ears. So put on smocks and choose a work area in which neither of you has to worry about spills and stains.

**Get down to your child's level.** The work space should be comfortable for her; the floor or a low table will do just fine. Get a pillow for yourself and join in. She'll feel that she's in charge of the activity, and you'll be better able to get really involved.

**Follow the leader.** Whether you're touring a children's museum or making mud pies, Dr. Perry recommends that you let your preschooler set the pace for the activity. You want her to feel that her interests matter and that you believe in her ability to make decisions.

**Enjoy your child's enjoyment.** Don't worry if your interest in the activity flags occasionally—this is normal for adults. Focus your attention on the enjoyment your child gets from the project and the pleasure you feel in working with him, advises Dr. Perry.

**Don't go for goals.** As satisfying as it is to end up with a terrific finished product, resist the urge to put too much emphasis on doing so, Dr. Perry says. You aren't trying to produce something, as much as you are showing your child how much fun it is to simply share these moments.

One more thing: You don't have to finish what you started. (What a relief!) A preschooler's attention span is much shorter than an adult's, so he may lose interest. And certainly don't finish the project for him, says Dr. Perry. Follow your child's lead; come back to the project later, or start another. For a preschooler, there's always something new to try!

*Jenny Hart Danowski is a Redmond, Washington-based freelance writer specializing in health, travel, and family issues.*



You and your child can create "clay cookies" or sculptures out of homemade play dough.

## Play Clay

Here's a new twist on an old favorite: Mix up a batch of play clay. (The recipe involves cooking; remember, this part isn't for your child.) Extend the activity by letting the sculptures you make dry overnight and then decorating them the next day with tempera paint. Once the paint dries, display your creations and invite the neighbors to visit your personal art exhibit.

### What You Need

- 2 cups baking soda
- 1 cup cornstarch
- 1½ cups water
- Food coloring (optional)
- Tempera paint (optional)

### MIX IT UP!

1. Ask your child to help you measure the ingredients and pour them into a saucepan.
2. Cook over medium heat, stirring con-

stantly, until mixture thickens (about 3–5 minutes).

3. Scoop dough out of the pan with a spatula and

place it on a cutting board or another flat surface. Cover with a damp cloth and let the dough cool.

4. Let your child knead the cooled dough until it is smooth; then squish and sculpt! Decorate air-dried objects with tempera paint.

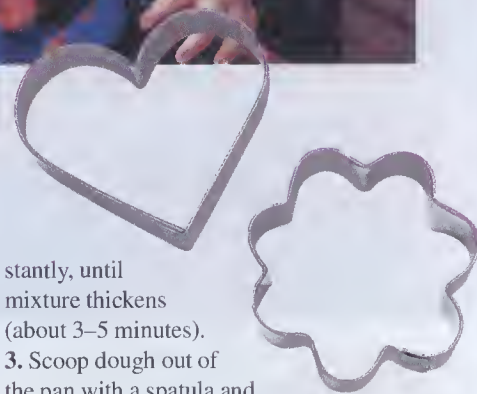
**TIP** Make red, blue, or multicolored play clay. For a batch of dough of a single color, add food coloring to the water before combining it with the other ingredients. For

play clay of different colors, wait until cooked dough cools (step 3), then separate into sections. Add food coloring to each section before kneading.

### FOR MORE FUN

Supply your child with these household tools:

- A rolling pin or spatula, for flattening the dough
- Cookie cutters, for making neat shapes
- Craft sticks, for cutting
- Forks and other utensils, for making patterns
- Shells and other objects, for making imprints in the dough





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## Hands-on Ice Cream

Believe it or not, with a few household ingredients and in just five simple steps, you and your preschooler can make delicious homemade ice cream!

### What You Need

- ¼ cup milk
- 1 clear quart-size resealable bag
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups snow or crushed ice
- 1 clear gallon-size resealable bag
- ½ cup table salt
- 1 pair mittens (or thick socks)

### MIX IT UP!

1. Help your child measure the milk and pour it into the quart-size reseal-

able bag. Then add the cream, sugar, and vanilla. Expel excess air and seal the bag.

2. Scoop up about 2 cups of snow or crushed ice and place it in the gallon-size bag. Pour in the salt. Don't zip the bag shut just yet. (Note: The ingredients in this bag are not meant to be eaten.)

3. Place the sealed ingredient-filled bag inside the snow- or ice-filled bag, expel excess air, and seal.

4. Put mittens on your child's hands and let him gently knead the bags for about 10 minutes, turning them over occasionally to knead the other side. Watch your child's amazement as the mixture begins to thicken and the ingredients turn into ice cream.

5. Once the ice cream is ready to eat, help your child spoon it into a cup or onto a cone. Add sprinkles for a treat. (Don't worry if the ice cream turns out a little goopy, it will still taste great!)

## FOR MORE FUN

■ While you prepare the recipe, have your child sample each ingredient and compare the different tastes.

■ As you knead the mixture, observe how the ingredients change in appearance and texture when combined. Your preschooler will be thrilled that he's created something he thought could only be store-bought!

## Paint Pops

On those gray winter afternoons when brushes and paints aren't enough to brighten your child's day, go one better with Paint Pops. Kids love sliding these colorful cubes over paper and watching the paint melt into a beautiful picture. You can make the pops ahead of time; freeze them overnight so they're ready to go when you are.

### What You Need

- Different colors of tempera paint or food coloring
- Water
- Ice-cube tray (or mini-muffin pan)
- Craft sticks
- Paper

### MIX IT UP!

1. Thin the tempera paint with water (it should be runny), or mix food coloring with water.

2. Pour the paint or food-colored water into an ice-cube tray (one color per section) and place the tray in the freezer. When the mixture starts to freeze, stand





the craft sticks in each section. (Adjust the sticks later, if necessary.) Freeze until solid.

3. Remove the pops from the tray and invite your child to paint with them.

## FOR MORE FUN

■ If possible, use snow as a canvas for your child's masterpieces. Fill separate spray bottles with water and food coloring. Let your child spray paint designs in the snow.

■ For a minimal-mess alternative, set your child up outside with a brush and water so he can paint a picture on a wall or a sidewalk.

## Wonder Walks

On sunny winter days, bundle up and go out for a mini-walk. Here are some suggestions:

**Teensy-weensy Walk** What's the smallest thing your preschooler sees while on this walk? A pebble? An ant? How many itty-bitty things can she spy in the space of one giant step?

**Sights-of-the-Season Stroll** Ask your child to point out signs of winter (bare trees, snow, icicles) and search for hints of spring (mud, buds, birds, and so on).

**Cloud-Watcher Walk** What forms does your child see in the clouds—a car, a valentine, an alligator, or maybe a dragon?

**Color Ramble** Collect objects in nature that are your child's favorite color or the colors of a rainbow.

**TIP** Extend the activity by helping a

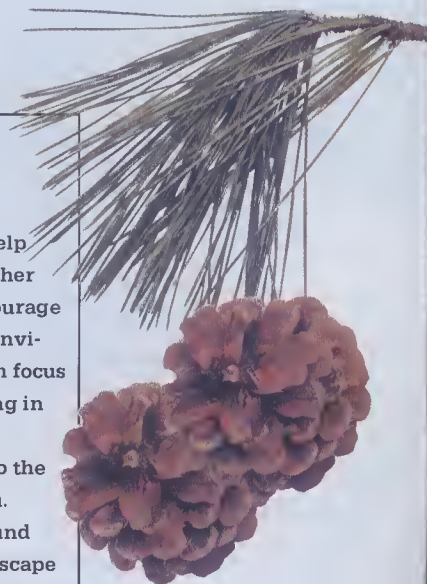
## FOR MORE FUN

■ These kinds of walks help your youngster heighten her observational skills, encourage her appreciation for the environment, and let you both focus on the importance of being in the moment.

■ Shh! Pause and listen to the sounds that surround you.

■ Take a careful look around and discuss how the landscape changes from season to season.

■ Take along a magnifying glass and use it to open up new worlds of exploration.



younger child write a story, draw pictures, or press leaves in a book to remember his experi-

ence. Encourage an older child to start a journal to record his discoveries. ■

*Joan Novelli lives in Burlington, Vermont. Her five-year-old son has given these activities his stamp of approval.*



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# Snow Days

**A mom recalls how great family memories are made**

BY LINDA BERNSTEIN

**I**N MASSACHUSETTS, WHEN I was growing up, there was a blizzard every week, and the snow got so high that we couldn't even get out the back door.

Well, maybe not really. But that's how I remember it.

My family shared a double driveway, and after each snowfall a double load of snow would be plowed into the corner between our garage and the backyard fence. Sometimes the pile covered the garage roof, and because the weak winter sun barely reached it, the snow wouldn't disappear until Mother's Day. (This is true. I asked my parents.)

There we built our snow forts. Although she did not jump into the snow with us, my mother would join us in the crystal cold, keeping a watchful eye as we burrowed into a bank, scooping the snow out behind us. Little by little, the interior space would grow until we could sit inside. The whole time, my mom watched, just in case the cave collapsed. She tried not to let us know she was nervous. We knew anyway, and we didn't care.

Then, I didn't appreciate what a struggle this must have been for her. But now that I'm a mom myself, I know how she fought against her instincts so her children could enjoy this winter-wonderland activity. Afterward, we would settle down to read library books about snowbound cultures, so that we could learn about how real igloos are made and how people live in snowy climes. This was my mother's idea, and it made our snow days into a true learning experience.

But mostly, burrowing into the snow was fun. Inside the cave everything felt so cozy that, even as a child, I knew that sometime in the far-off future I'd want to build snow caves with my children so they, too, could

**In the park we found a drift. And we began to dig.**

feel this snug and safe.

When that future came, my husband and I were living in New York City, with no backyard or driveway. And, as my children grew from babies into toddlers and barreled toward adolescence, it barely snowed.

Every winter my children would ask, "Can we build a snow cave?" And I would say, "I hope so." But by the time spring arrived, we would always be disappointed. Then on Sunday, January 7, 1996, it snowed. And snowed. And snowed. By the afternoon a white blanket lay almost 14 inches deep on the sidewalks, and still the flakes came down. That night, it was announced on the radio that for the first time in 14 years, the New York City public schools (which my children attend) would have a snow day. A snow day! A holiday! By Monday morning there were nearly 2 feet on the ground, and still it snowed.

"Let's go to the park and build snow caves!" I said.

My kids, aged 9 and 12, groaned. "We're too old! Snow caves are for babies!"

My husband and I exchanged meaningful glances. Despite how mature my kids thought they might be, we knew they'd have the time of their lives. So within minutes, we were all

bundled up, ready to brave the storm.

It's hard to describe the hush that covered the city that morning, how there were no cars on the streets, and how, as we walked into the park, we left deep tracks behind us, like explorers in an uncharted land. We found a 7-foot drift. And we began to dig. My formerly cynical children went wild. The cave took shape. First there was room for one child, then the other. My husband and I stood outside, nervous that the cave might collapse.

Two hours later we headed home, our cheeks chapped from the cold. "We should get some books," I thought. But the library was shut, so we told stories instead.

"When I'm an adult and I live up north," said my son, who hates hot weather, "I'll do this with my children."

"When I'm a ballet dancer in New York City, I'll make forts with my kids right here," my daughter added.

Who knows? Maybe I'll go visit, to keep an eye on my grandchildren as they dig. How to make a snow cave? That's something they'll figure out themselves. But how to make the activity even more special? That's something that takes a parent's (or a grandmother's) touch. ■

*Linda Bernstein is associate editor at Sesame Street Parents.*





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# Getting your younger child in on the fun

## YOUR NEW BABY

BY BETH LEVINE

## Playgroups Are for Toddlers, Too!



In playgroups, toddlers can take the first steps toward forming friendships.

**F**ERN SCHAPIRO WORRIED THAT her younger child, Lauren, would be lonely when Philip, then age three, started preschool. So she found a playgroup for Lauren. "It seemed like a good idea," the Stamford, Connecticut, mother explains.

As it turns out, the experts agree. "Toddler playgroups are a good idea for a second or third child, because having an activity that is entirely the child's own helps her self-esteem," observes Paula McMurray-Schwarz, Ph.D., assistant professor of human development and family studies at Iowa State University of Science and Technology in Ames, who studies young children.

Babies aged 12 to 18 months may not be capable of forming strong bonds with other infants, but the early socialization of playgroups is still important. "These can be a great place for young children to take first steps toward developing friendships, and for them to hone their language skills," Dr. McMurray-Schwarz says.

Playgroups aren't just good for the toddler; they also offer parents real benefits.

You get the opportunity to observe your children at play, and the chance to gain the support and companionship of other parents. "Even if you have an older child, you forget how you handled situations with babies. In the playgroup you may get new ideas and refresh old ones," says Lori Goodman of New York City, a mother of two.

### GETTING STARTED

If you know of an existing playgroup that you can join, great. (Typically, the easiest ways to find one are through bulletin boards at pediatricians' offices and religious institutions.)

But if you don't know of one, why not start your own? Talk to friends who have

toddlers, or put up flyers advertising the group. And while you're getting organized, keep in mind the following guidelines from Sheila Wolper, a coauthor of *Playgroups: From 18 Months to Kindergarten—a Complete Guide for Parents* (Pocket Books):

**How Many Kids?** Keep the groups small—no more than six children.

**How Long a Session?** For kids under the age of two, sessions should last no more than 1½ hours. Try to meet in the morning, since most toddlers still take afternoon naps.

**Where?** To keep costs down, most playgroups meet in people's homes, on a rotating schedule. In good weather, however, you can get together in a playground or park.

**Safety** It's smart to make up and distribute a childproofing checklist to every playgroup family. All meeting places must have a first-aid kit and a detailed emergency card for each child (listing any allergies, an emergency contact person, and a doctor's telephone and address).

**Discipline** Discuss beforehand how you want to handle discipline. (Can anyone reprimand a child, or just the parent? When are time-outs appropriate?)

**Other Decisions** Also make sure you

talk over issues such as whether caregivers can attend playgroups in place of the parent, or whether, after the first several meetings, parents can get "time off," on a rotating schedule, during sessions.

This may sound like a lot of work, but it's really not. If you're lucky, everyone will help out and you'll end up with new friends as well as a place that will stimulate your child.

The bottom line, says Dr. McMurray-Schwarz, is that playgroups are great for toddlers because "children get a chance to develop their whole bodies, their whole selves." ■

## When You're the Host

Is the playgroup coming to your house? These tips from Cosby Rogers, Ph.D., the author of *Helping Young Children Develop Through Play* (National Association for the Education of Young Children), will help you and your family prepare.

■ Put away favorite toys. That way your child won't have trouble sharing.

■ Provide doubles of desirable items. This will minimize squabbling.

■ Include your older child if she is around. Helping toddlers will make her feel special. (If she is not interested, find a quiet activity she can do somewhere nearby.)

■ Recheck your house for possible safety problems. Carefully examine toys for choking hazards.

■ Don't try to direct toddler play. Have a few age-appropriate activities ready, but don't force the issue. There should be lots of time for exploratory free play.

Beth Levine, a freelance writer living in Stamford, Connecticut,

writes frequently about parenting issues. She is the mother of four-year-old Levi.

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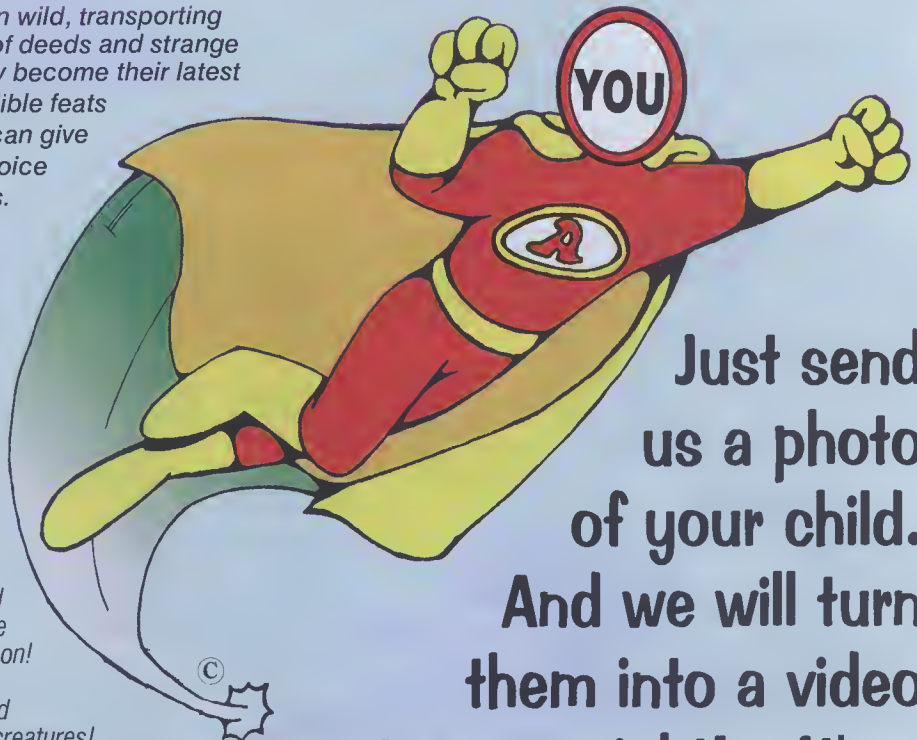
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Even second-time moms get the blues

# YOUR NEW BABY

BY ANTONIA VAN DER MEER

## "Why Don't I Feel Happy?"

**T**HE MOTHER OF A NINE-YEAR-old daughter, and a successful composer and professor of music, Charlotte Robinson (not her real name) was overjoyed when she learned she was pregnant for the second time. But two weeks after her baby was born, something changed. She seemed suddenly lost and confused in a world of diapers and late-night feedings. And by the time she entered the office of Shaila Misri, M.D., clinical professor of psychiatry and obstetrics-gynecology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, it was apparent that she was despondent. Over the course of a few months, Robinson grew excessively anxious and stressed. She rarely slept at night, couldn't concentrate, and often felt as if she couldn't breathe. Dr. Misri's diagnosis: postpartum depression.

Charlotte's distressing experience is typical of those mothers who suffer from this kind of serious, frequently debilitating depression, according to Dr. Misri, also the author of *Shouldn't I Be Happy? Emotional Problems of Pregnant and Postpartum Women* (The Free Press). Having a baby, which is usually one of the most joyful events of a woman's life, says Dr. Misri, who treats depressed mothers, can also be the cause of unexpected sadness. Sometimes this sadness may hit a first-time mom; other times, as in Robinson's case, a mother has her first bout of depression following the

birth of a second or third child.

It's common for mothers to suffer from what is known as postpartum blues (a manageable, temporary feeling of despondency). But when the blues develop into a deeper, more severe form of despair, the condition requires treatment.

### WHY SO BLUE?

The postpartum blues, which strike between 40 percent and 80 percent of new moms, typically occur on the third or fourth day after birth, according to Dr. Misri. Experts now believe that the blues are triggered by the sudden, dramatic shift of reproductive hormones in the days and weeks following childbirth. For instance, the corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH), which is thought to help people handle stress, dips to a low level during the postpartum period, and may take days or weeks to build up again.

Typically, a case of postpartum blues requires no medical treatment and passes within seven to ten days. With help from Dad, support from friends, and an extra nap or two, most moms start to improve on their own. [See "Seven Ways to Beat Postpartum Blues," on the following page.]

But 10 percent to 12 percent of new mothers develop postpartum depression. This condition differs from the blues in both



## Do Dads Get Sad?

Yes. In her book *Shouldn't I Be Happy?* (The Free Press), Dr. Shaila Misri notes that the postpartum experience for dads is often overlooked. But men, like women, go through profound changes each time they become a parent.

"They may become worried or anxious about their ability to handle the added responsibilities of being a father again," she explains. When a woman experiences postpartum blues or depression, the father's feelings may become even more complex. He may begin to feel guilty about his wife's condition or feel isolated and resentful during her recovery process. There may be sexual adjustments to be made as well. The physical

demands of caring for the baby and other small children can lower a woman's arousal level, increasing strain on the marriage. And since men have been socialized to contain their emotions, the psychological turmoil of the postpartum period can be difficult for them to handle.

To address these issues, Dr. Misri believes that the husband should always participate in the treatment of his partner. A good therapist will spend time with the couple together and individually, making sure that the husband is fully educated about his partner's condition and actively involved in her recovery. Dr. Misri also urges couples to make time for each other and to discuss their concerns. "Talk openly with your spouse about the issues affecting you," she says.

the intensity and duration of sad feelings, notes Dr. Misri. Instead of experiencing both ups and downs, a depressed mother has all downs.

Why do some moms slide from the blues into depression? These women are often more susceptible to getting depressed, says Dr. Misri, adding that there's no way to explain why a woman may become emotionally troubled following one pregnancy and not another. Powerful hormonal changes caused by pregnancy and birth can trigger negative feelings. Typically, mothers most likely to experience postpartum depression have the following risk factors:

- A history of depression or mental illness, and/or a family history of these conditions
- Strong mood swings accompanying menstruation or PMS
- A prior postpartum depression
- Additional psychological stress caused by circumstances such as job loss or marital difficulty

"Although none of these factors will necessarily cause postnatal depression," says Dr. Misri, "any or all of them may contribute to it." She notes that it's also possible to become depressed without any of these risk factors.

While simply feeling despondent for several days may be an indication of depression, here are other, more significant signs to look for:

- Extreme exhaustion or irritability
- Difficulty sleeping or insomnia
- Frequent crying bouts
- Inability to enjoy your baby
- Thoughts of harming the baby or yourself
- Panic attacks, characterized by a sense of fear or doom, a racing heartbeat, dizziness, and nausea

Postpartum depression is a widely recognized and treatable condition, and women should not be ashamed to ask for help, emphasizes Dr. Misri. Seek the advice of a medical professional, such as an obstetri-

cian, family doctor, or mental health practitioner. If the problem falls outside of your doctor's area of expertise, he should be able to refer you to the appropriate specialist.

#### HOW TREATMENT CAN HELP

Depression is most effectively treated through counseling, medication, or a combination of the two. Dr. Misri explains that the spouse, older children, and even extended family may be included in the therapy so that they understand what the mother is experiencing and how they can help. "But don't use the word *depressed* with a preschooler," Dr. Misri says. "She won't understand what it means." Instead, parents should explain to the child that mom isn't feeling too well these days, but she's getting help from a doctor.

Another thing that may be discussed during a typical counseling session is the family's routines, including the new baby's. Then a plan should be developed to ease the pressure the mother is experiencing, and to allow her to enjoy her new baby without being overwhelmed.

Managing postpartum depression can be more difficult when there are other young children in the home, notes Dr. Misri. "In that case, treatment may take longer," she explains, "because of the additional responsibilities and demands on the mother." Fathers should help out as much as possible with diapers, bottles, meals, baths, and bed-times. Besides, Dr. Misri adds, "the more proficient your husband feels at baby care, the more he'll enjoy taking an active role in fathering."

Treatment may take a few months or longer, says Dr. Misri, but in most cases, women who experience postpartum depression are able to fully recover and enjoy their new baby. ■

*Antonia van der Meer is the author of Great Beginnings: An Illustrated Guide to You and Your Baby's First Year (Dell).*

## Seven Ways to Beat Postpartum Blues

It's normal to feel a little down right after having a baby. Dr. Shaila Misri of the University of British Columbia offers several suggestions for getting out from under those dark clouds.

**Eat four small, nutritious meals each day.** Moms busy with a newborn and older children may be tempted to skip meals. "But going too long without food can cause fluctuations in your insulin levels, which will affect your mood," Dr. Misri says.

**Cut back on caffeine.** Caffeine may increase feelings of anxiety, so limit your coffee and soda intake.

**Remember to exercise.** A walk or postnatal exercise class can improve your mood by producing endorphins, the body's natural mood enhancers.

**Encourage your husband to do his fair share.** This means that when he steps in to change diapers, make dinner, or help with older siblings, make sure you step back. Try not to look over his shoulder or constantly correct his parenting style.

**Get as much sleep as you can.** Breast-feeding moms might consider using a breast pump during the day and asking their husband to feed the baby at night (or supplement nighttime feedings with formula).

**Hire a baby-sitter.** Some relief from baby care is important for moms who have the blues. Time away will not interfere with bonding.

**Join a moms-and-tots group.** Even though you already know other mothers through your older child, it helps to spend time with mothers of newborns who share similar concerns. To find such a group, ask friends, your child's doctor, or post a note on a community bulletin board.

For additional support, contact Depression After Delivery, a new self-help group for mothers experiencing postpartum depression. The Morrisville, Pennsylvania-based organization offers educational materials and referrals to support groups nationwide; call 800-944-4773.



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# Turning points in the first two years YOUR NEW BABY

BY MARY ARRIGO

## Three Stages of Separation

OUR SEVEN-MONTH-OLD suddenly bursts into tears when you hand him to Grandma—as you’ve done many times before—but stops crying as soon as he’s back in your arms. Or maybe your 18-month-old runs off giggling one moment, then demands to be held the next. What’s going on?

Even for second-time parents, a baby’s stages of separation can be confusing and exasperating, says William Sears, M.D., a co-author of *The Baby Book* (Little, Brown) and a father of eight. There may also be some variations in the ways that siblings negotiate the path to independence. Knowing what’s behind your new baby’s actions can make the experience easier and more enjoyable for both of you. Following are guideposts to help parents understand the process of attachment and separation in the first two years.

### THE FIRST MONTHS

The moment you cradle your newborn in your arms and look into her eyes, you begin the process of bonding. During the first three months, the baby is entirely dependent on you. The development of this strong attachment will give her the resources she’ll need later in life to cope on her own, explains Dr. Sears.

By the second month, most mothers feel truly connected to their babies, Dr. Sears says, and an infant doesn’t yet know where her body ends and her mother’s begins. While your first baby may have let himself be held by anyone when he was rested and

satisfied, your second may make it clear that only Mom will do when she’s tired or hungry. Both behaviors are normal.

### STAGE 1

#### REACHING OUT, STAYING CLOSE (4 TO 8 MONTHS)

As babies near the middle of their first year, they are just beginning to realize that



Mother is actually a separate person and that there’s lots to explore beyond her arms. Your baby won’t mind watching you from a distance now as he plays, though he still wants you to stay close because he’s not sure you’ll return if you leave. “Peekaboo is a favorite game during this stage,” says Louise J. Kaplan, Ph.D., the author of *Oneness and Separateness: From Infant to Individual* (Touchstone). “As your child watches you disappear and reappear, he gets instant reassurance that if you do go away, you’ll be back soon.”

While mothers are still the central figure in an infant’s life, other family members now play significant roles, notes Dr. Kaplan. Fathers, siblings, caregivers, and grandparents become a circle of familiar faces for the baby.

### STAGE 2

#### MOMMY STAY NEAR

(8 TO 12 MONTHS)

By seven or eight months most babies have become mobile, and some experience separation anxiety now that they have the ability to leave a parent’s side. In fact, you might be surprised at how vehemently your formerly easygoing eight-month-old protests if you walk out of the room for even a few moments. But there’s little cause for concern. As the baby feels more secure about his own mobility and growing sense of separateness, he’ll be better able to tolerate time spent apart.

By the end of the first year most babies are cruising and then walking. Your toddler has also developed what psychologists call object permanence, says Dr. Sears, which means your image is stored in his memory. This helps him feel secure, and even brave, when he’s away from you. At the same time, strangers can make babies uncomfortable, notes Dr. Kaplan, because they introduce an element of unpredictability into the environment. That’s why children cling to Mom when strangers are around.

### STAGE 3 FINDING HIS OWN PACE (12 TO 18 MONTHS)

The need for Mom can be quite intense as a toddler enters his second year, Dr. Kaplan says. At this age your child knows for sure that you are a separate person—a potentially frightening realization. You may find

that one or both of your children suddenly lose the bravado of early toddlerhood. “Most toddlers yo-yo between the desire to run headlong toward new experiences, and the need to stay close to their mother,” Dr. Kaplan says.

As they approach age two, many children will happily wave good-bye to Mom if they’re in a familiar environment, but will protest when left in a strange place, such as a new day care or preschool. The challenge for parents is to balance a youngster’s need for refuge with his desire to move away at his own pace. By doing so, you’ll build a solid base of security—a foundation that will support him for life. ■

Mary Arrigo, a mother of three, writes frequently about parenting issues.



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# Answers to parents' medical questions YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH

BY THE SPECIALISTS OF JOHNS  
HOPKINS CHILDREN'S CENTER  
EDITED BY JO MARTIN

## FLUORIDE SAFETY

**Q** My pediatrician has prescribed fluoride tablets for my three-year-old because we drink distilled water. Recently, I heard that prolonged use of such pills can cause cancer. Is this true? And if my child uses a fluoride toothpaste, are the pills necessary?

**A** Fluoride is essential in controlling chronic tooth decay and maintaining healthy teeth. Your concern that fluoride pills cause cancer is unfounded. A 1990 study by the National Toxicology Program reported that 4 rats out of more than 1,000 mice and rats developed a rare bone cancer after ingesting high levels of fluoride. However, in February 1991 the U.S. Public Health Service concluded that there is no evidence of a link between fluoride and cancer in humans.

The proper dosage for your son will be calculated by his dentist on the basis of his age, weight, and existing fluoride intake, including the use of fluoride toothpaste. Make sure your son uses only a pea-size amount of toothpaste on his toothbrush; swallowing excess amounts of fluoride can result in fluorosis,

a chalky mottling of tooth enamel.

Fluoride supplements come in drops or chewable tablets. The latter are preferred for children and adolescents, since they provide both topical and systemic benefits.

*Jane Ligums, D.M.D.*  
General dentist

## HEMORRHOIDS

**Q** My five-year-old has developed hemorrhoids.

**How can we treat the condition and prevent it from recurring?**

**A** A hemorrhoid is an enlarged blood vessel in the rectum. The condition is uncommon at this age, but may occur if your child has been constipated. Sometimes, however, a hemorrhoid may be confused with a perianal skin tag. This

is an extra piece of tissue around the rectum that children are either born with or develop as a result of constipation.

The best treatment for constipation and, therefore, hemorrhoids is a high-fiber diet, which will keep your child's stools soft and regular. Include plenty of cereals, bran, fruits, and green leafy vegetables in his diet. Juice can also

## LATE WALKING

**Q** My 18-month-old crawls and climbs, but does not stand by herself or walk without holding onto something. Is this slower development a cause for concern?

**A** Walking is an important physical milestone, but the age at which a child takes her first steps can range from 10 to

18 months; the average age is about 12 to 13 months. However, if your daughter was born prematurely, the age at which she will walk should be calculated from the day she was due, not from her actual birth date.

If a child has not started to walk by herself by the time she is 18 months old, she should be evaluated by her doctor, who will check for problems in the development of her muscles and nerves. At that point she may be referred to a neurologist or developmental pediatrician.

*Janet Serwint, M.D.*  
Assistant professor  
of pediatrics

*Paul Sponseller, M.D.*  
Director, Department of  
Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery

## PLAYING WITH MAKEUP

**Q** My three-year-old daughter likes to play by putting on makeup and moisturizer. Will this harm her skin?

**A** Makeup products that are meant for adults should probably not be used on children. Many products contain preservatives and stabilizers (substances that keep the makeup or lotion from separating or breaking down) and fragrances that can sometimes cause skin irritation or allergic reactions

when used by youngsters.

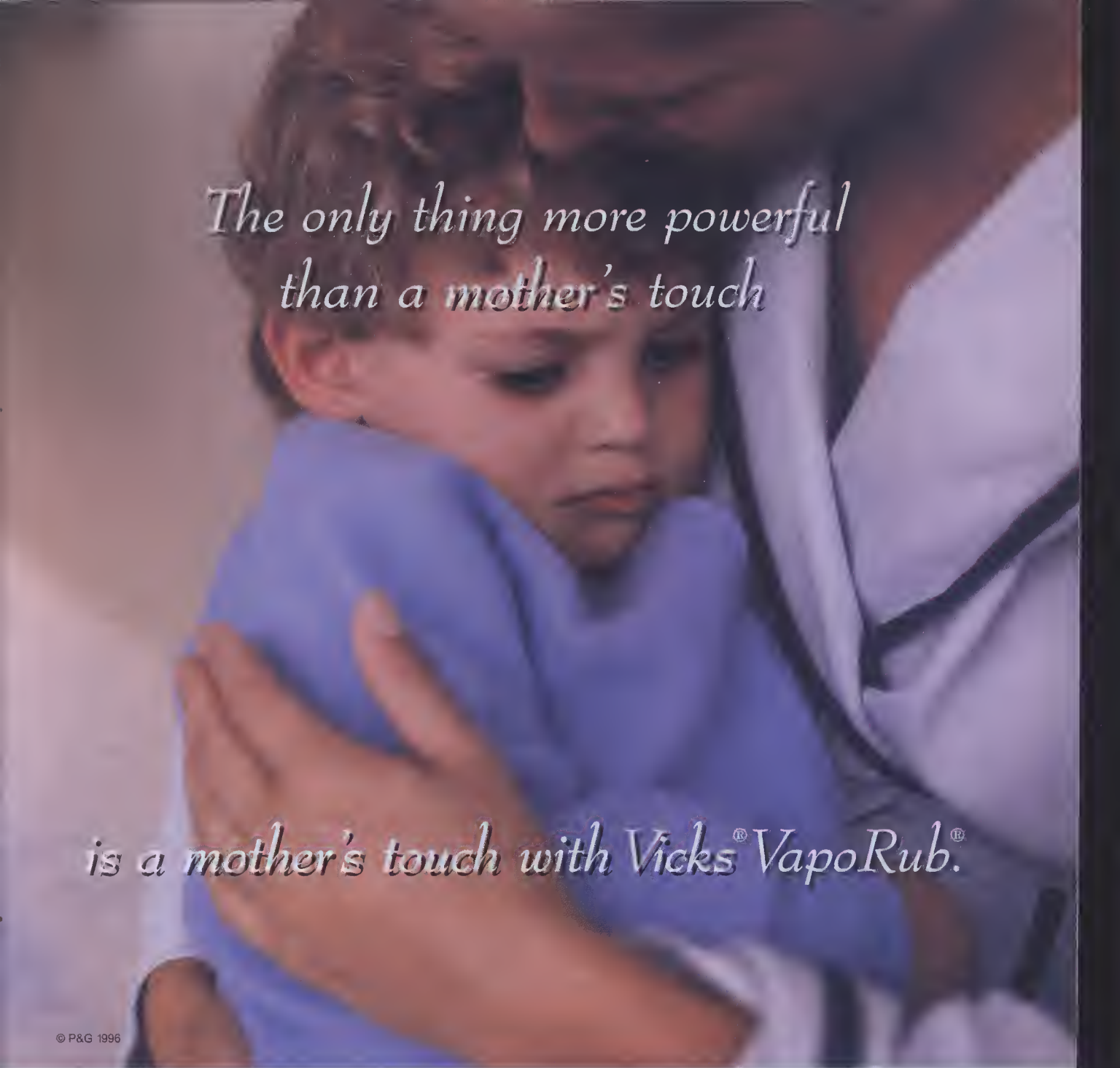
Symptoms of an allergic reaction include red or blistered skin, itching, or burning. If your daughter seems sensitive to certain cosmetics or lotions, but she still wants to play "makeup," offer her fragrance-free moisturizer to apply instead.

*Bernard Cohen, M.D.*  
Director, Department of  
Pediatric Dermatology

**A note to our readers:** The information in *Your Child's Health* is general and cannot take the place of the advice of a health care practitioner who is familiar with your child.

**Ask the Doctors**  
Send your questions, including your child's age, to *Your Child's Health*, SSP, One Lincoln Plaza, New York, NY 10023. E-mail questions to [sspletters@aol.com](mailto:sspletters@aol.com), or fax them to 212-875-6105.  
We regret that letters cannot be answered individually.





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Let your computer bring out the Mozart in your child

# FAMILY COMPUTING

BY CAROLYN JABS

## The sounds of software

**W**HETHER THEY'RE singing with you in the bathroom at potty time, banging on pots and pans, or sharing whatever instruments happen to be in your home, kids love making music. Now, thanks to some recently introduced CD-ROM software, the home computer can be turned into a musical instrument that even preschoolers can play.

### SING A SONG

As a child, I had a little phonograph that played scratchy versions of my favorite songs as many times as my mother's sanity would permit. Now my son can do the same thing with the computer. Programs like *Fisher-Price Sing-Alongs: Barnyard Rhythm and Moos* (Davidson & Associates, 800-545-7677; Windows/Mac CD-ROM; \$32.95) and *TuneLand* (7th Level, 800-884-8863; Windows or Mac CD-ROM; \$29.95), starring the comedian Howie Mandel, offer unlimited access to classics such as "Old MacDonald" and "Itsy Bitsy Spider."

The computing in these programs is limited to pointing and clicking, but that gives preschoolers the enormously satisfying power to play the music they want to hear as often as they want to hear it. Parents can enrich the experience further by encouraging kids who are glued to the screen to jump up and move to the music. "Movement helps kids internalize musical concepts," says Michael Blakeslee, director of production and promotion for the Music Educators National Conference in Reston, Virginia. He also suggests putting simple instruments like shakers near the computer to encourage participation.



### MEET THE INSTRUMENTS

Few preschoolers get more than passing access to musical instruments, but a growing number of computer programs allow kids to "play" instruments as big as a piano. For instance, one segment of *Allie's Playhouse* (Opcode Interactive, 800-557-2633; Windows/Mac CD-ROM; \$29.95), a multi-purpose program for young children, encourages kids to design and then play their own musical instruments. In *Lamb Chop Loves Music* (Philips Media, 800-883-3767; Windows/Mac CD-ROM; \$29.99), a retelling of "The Bremen Town Musicians," kids can visit The Music Room, where they click on members of the wind, string, brass, and percussion families to initiate a brief description of the instrument and a short musical passage. More sophisticated is *Musical Instruments* (Microsoft, 800-426-

9400; Windows/Mac CD-ROM; \$34.95), a grown-up encyclopedia that covers over 200 instruments from around the world. Although young children won't benefit from the detailed descriptions of the instruments, they will love to sit on a parent's lap and point and click to hear the sounds.

"These programs are great in giving kids experiences they wouldn't otherwise have," says Blakeslee. He suggests, however, that parents also seek out opportunities for children to see, touch, and hear real instruments at concerts, museums, and even instrument "petting zoos," which are often sponsored by local orchestras. "The moment you guide a child's fingers on an instrument, their whole relationship with music changes," explains Blakeslee. "Listening is essential, but doing music is the best way to learn about it."

### MAKE MUSIC

Remarkably, some computer programs make it possible for very young children to "do" music long before they have the dexterity to master an instrument. For instance, in *Menlo the Frog: A Musical Fairy Tale* (Windy Hill Productions, 800-850-4884; Windows/Mac CD-ROM; \$39.95), one simple activity allows kids to arrange short musical segments represented by animals into their own compositions. *Lenny's MusicToons* (Viacom New Media, 800-469-2539; Windows or Mac CD-ROM or diskette; \$34.95) gives preschoolers a choice of performers, instruments, and props for their own music videos. And *Kid Riffs* (IBM, 800-426-7235; Windows CD-ROM; \$23.99) turns slightly older kids loose with hundreds of short musical segments they can mix and match, changing tempo and instrumentation.

Personally, I found all these programs most rewarding when my son and I played with them together. I bounced him up and down on my lap through a rousing chorus of "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain." And I was every bit as delighted as he was when he could recognize the sounds of different instruments, or string together bits of music to make his own songs.

Musical software hasn't replaced listening to tapes in the car, inventing serendipitous songs on our drinking glasses at dinner, or singing together at bedtime, but it's brought both of us enormous pleasure. And, come to think of it, that's probably the best foundation for a lifelong love of music. ■

Carolyn Jabs, contributing editor of Home PC magazine, has three children.



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A pediatrician confronts a crisis in her pregnancy

# DOCTOR'S NOTE

BY CLAIRE MCCARTHY, M.D.

## "There's Something Wrong With Your Baby"

(The first in a two-part series)



This ultrasound forced Dr. McCarthy and her husband to make a very difficult decision.

**O**N JUNE 15, 1995, ON A DAY that will be crystal clear in my memory forever, my husband and I found out that there was something wrong with the baby I was carrying inside me.

We were completely unprepared for this information. I was five months pregnant; I'd had a routine ultrasound two weeks earlier that showed a baby boy who was fine except that his cerebral ventricles, the fluid-filled spaces in his brain, were a little large. There is probably nothing to worry about, we were told, but you should have an amniocentesis because this finding increases the baby's risk of chromosomal problems. As a pediatrician, I knew the terrible possibilities associated with chromo-

somal problems, so I agreed to the amniocentesis. The results came back normal, and we heaved a sigh of relief at the end of an ordeal. We'd had two healthy children, and felt confident that it would be no different with our third.

### HARD CHOICES

The repeat ultrasound was to be a formality, nothing else. But instead, the radiologist was looking at us seriously and telling us there was something wrong.

"I think your baby has agenesis of the corpus callosum," she was saying. "I'm not entirely sure. I'd like you to come back in a week." My mind began to spin. The corpus callosum is a bundle of nerve fibers that connects the two hemispheres of the brain. Agenesis of the corpus callosum means that

this bundle of fibers isn't there. I tried to think of what this meant for the baby. As a pediatric resident, I had taken care of children in the hospital who were missing their corpus callosum, and they all had major neurologic problems, like seizures and retardation. But I had also heard that you could lack a corpus callosum and be fine. What did this mean?

The radiologist did not offer any information. Instead, she asked us if we had thought about "termination."

Termination? Abortion? Of course we hadn't thought about it. We thought our baby was healthy.

"Well," she said, "you don't need to feel pressed. You can get a third trimester abortion in Kansas for a medical indication like this one."

That must mean this is awful, I thought. In Massachusetts abortions are legal only through 24 weeks. Her face and her voice were very serious. Clearly, she was telling us that if next week's ultrasound confirmed the diagnosis, we should have an abortion.

She asked if we had questions. We didn't know what to ask; we were too overwhelmed and confused. She left the room.

I sobbed all the way home. I had felt the baby kicking for almost two months; he was more active and vigorous than my other children had been. When I pressed on my belly, he kicked back. He was a real person to me, this baby boy; I'd seen his face on the ultrasound, and his hands and his heart and his toes. To abort now felt too horrible to fathom. And yet having a severely retarded baby felt too horrible to fathom, too. I could not believe this was happening to us.

### A SECOND OPINION

As soon as we got home, we pulled out every medical textbook we could find in the house, but none of them had much information about agenesis of the corpus callosum. I couldn't stop shaking. I was so upset. In desperation, I called a friend from residency who had gone into neonatology and asked him if he knew anything about it. He said that he didn't know much, but that he had a friend who could help. He made a phone call, and the next day we went to the New England Medical Center in Boston, to its Center for Perinatal Diagnosis, for a second opinion.

After a long, careful ultrasound there, the obstetrician told us that, indeed, our baby did have agenesis of the corpus callosum. But, she said, this isn't necessarily a terrible thing. We met with a perinatologist, who talked with us for more than an hour. She





Dr. McCarthy (left) in her office: "As a pediatrician, I have to be careful to keep my feelings out, to listen and explain."

and worried about the impact a sick baby would have on our other two children; yet there was the possibility that he would be fine. But more important, we realized as we talked and cried and held each other that we had come to think of him not as a possibility but as our child. At this point in the pregnancy, we couldn't go through with an abortion. Of course, we wanted a normal, healthy child. But we felt that if he wasn't, we as a couple and a family could manage

and make the best of things.

I've often wondered what would have happened if I hadn't called my friend and we hadn't gone to the New England Medical Center. Obviously, the radiologist who first suspected the diagnosis was a person who was unwilling to accept the possibility of problems—and had we not been able to get more information, had we not been able to meet Dr. Rosman, we might have gone along with her beliefs out of panic and

because we didn't know any better. Doctors are human, after all; it is hard not to bring our beliefs and our personalities into situations of uncertainty, of which there are very, very many in medicine. But what some doctors, like Dr. Rosman, understand better than others is that their beliefs and personalities may be quite different from those of their patients. I know that I as a pediatrician will be more careful in the future to keep my feelings out, and to try instead to explain and listen. And I hope that everyone who reads this will remember that doctors are human—and ask questions, ask for second opinions, ask for help.

My husband and I took a collective deep breath, held hands, and called my doctor to say that we had decided to continue the pregnancy. We knew that we had a long and possibly very hard road ahead of us, but we also knew that it was the right road for us. ■

*Dr. Claire McCarthy, the author of Learning How the Heart Beats: The Making of a Pediatrician (Viking), is a pediatrician at the Martha Eliot Health Center in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.*

**NEXT ISSUE:** Dr. McCarthy writes about the birth of her third child, and his diagnosis.

## Prenatal Testing

Most pregnant women worry about birth defects. But today's families who are interested in prenatal testing have more options than ever before. The March of Dimes offers the following list of available prenatal tests and services; for more information, consult your health care practitioner.

**Ultrasound** Probably the most common form of pregnancy screening, this noninvasive procedure is used to measure the fetus (to determine its age), identify multiple pregnancies, and detect physical malformations.

**Maternal Serum Alpha-fetoprotein (MSAFP)** This test, usually given around 16 weeks gestation, measures the level of a substance called alpha-fetoprotein in the mother's blood. Higher than normal levels of AFP have been linked to neural-tube defects; low levels have been linked to certain chromosomal disorders, such as Down syndrome. These high or low levels do not in themselves indicate the presence of birth defects, however, so an abnormal MSAFP usually requires follow-up testing and/or amniocentesis.

**Amniocentesis** Usually performed between the thirteenth and fifteenth weeks of a pregnancy, this highly accurate test can determine whether the fetus has chromosome abnormalities that would lead to Down syndrome or other genetic conditions. A small amount of amniotic fluid is drawn through a thin needle inserted through the mother's abdomen; results are available in two to four weeks. There is a slight chance of miscarriage or infection from the procedure (less than 1 in 200).

**Chorionic Villus Sampling (CVS)** A slim tube is inserted into the vagina and then the uterus to take a tissue sample from outside the sac where the fetus develops; the tissue is analyzed for chromosomal and genetic disorders. CVS can be performed earlier than amniocentesis (around nine weeks gestation), and results are available sooner (in about ten days). But it is a slightly less accurate procedure, and carries a higher risk of miscarriage: between 1 and 2 percent.

—Franny Shuker-Haines

explained that yes, agenesis of the corpus callosum can be associated with severe retardation and seizures, but not always. Some people have normal intelligence and no significant neurologic problems. The fact that the baby had no other apparent defects in his body, had normal chromosomes, and was a boy (there is one bad syndrome that only occurs in girls) made the chances of his being normal better. At this point in the pregnancy, however, there was really no way to know.

She arranged for us to meet with a neurologist who had followed children with this problem, a white-haired, soft-spoken man named Dr. Rosman. He took a complete medical history and then did something I didn't expect: He started asking us about us. Gently but directly, he asked us what we wanted from life. He asked us about how we felt about raising children and what we hoped for them. He asked us about our cultural and religious backgrounds. He asked us how we would feel about having a child with problems, describing various scenarios. Only after we had talked about this for quite a while did he begin to talk about agenesis of the corpus callosum.

He didn't tell us that much more than the perinatologist, but he was able to explain things in more detail, describing the different things that this could mean for the baby. He said that the baby had at least a 50 percent chance of being normal. But it was just a guess; nobody, he said, can be smart enough to predict these things. He said that whatever decision we made—to abort or not to abort—would be the right one.

### OUR DECISION

We spent the weekend thinking long and hard about it. We were sad and scared about the possibility of retardation and seizures,

*We had come to think of him not as a possibility but as our child.*

# Grahammmmmmmmmmm.



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Falling "in love" helps your child grow up

# ELEMENTARY YEARS

BY LUCY EMERSON SULLIVAN

## Be My Valentine

IS YOUR GRADE-SCHOOL DAUGHTER pining over a classmate who doesn't know she exists? Is your son always trying to catch a glimpse of the girl down the street?

If you're seeing some of this love-sick, starry-eyed behavior in your household, don't

*Having a crush is kind of like taking the heart out for a spin.*

panic. Although it can be unnerving from a parent's perspective, a childhood crush is harmless and normal—and also healthy.

"There's an assumption that school-age girls play with dolls, that boys play army games, and that they look at each other and say, 'Yuck,'" says Kathleen Hart, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at Xavier University in Cincinnati. "That's true, but kids this age are also capable of having romantic feelings."

Having a crush is kind of like taking the heart out for a spin, says Dr. Hart. Kids are "imagining relationships, working things through in their heads. It's practice." In other words, crushes are simply another rung on the ladder of growing up.

### THE REASONS BEHIND THE ROMANCE

Experts agree that a child's primary caregiver is her first love object. But then your little baby starts to grow up, and one of the ways she does is by focusing on someone besides, well, you. "This generally starts to happen in kindergarten or first grade, at ages four, five, or six," says Elyse V. Goldstein, Ph.D., a psychologist in private practice in New York City, who specializes in relationships and intimacy.

These early romantic yearnings are all a part of a child's first effort to move beyond the circle of her family. "A crush shows a child's willingness to separate from her main love object," explains Dr. Goldstein. This looking outward, in turn, helps a child

define herself, to see herself as a person who exists beyond the family. A crush is very personal: "It's her own heart and her own preference," says Dr. Goldstein. "Her mother can't tell her whom she should love."

When a child starts having crushes, chances are you will hear about it—at least for a little while. Four- to seven-year-olds usually talk openly about crushes, according to Elaine Hatfield, Ph.D., professor of psychology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, who studies passionate love and children. But, by the time your child is eight years old, don't be surprised if his private feelings become

SALLY  
and  
me  
4-ever  
2-getHER



exactly that—private. In her research, Dr. Hatfield has identified a "shy period" between the ages of 8 and 13, especially among boys.

As children near the end of elementary school and approach puberty, crushes may intensify; in fact, a 12-year-old's crush will be quite different from an 8-year-old's. "The feelings are based on real experiences the boy and girl may have shared," says Dr. Goldstein. "A twelve-year-old will say, 'I like her because we like the same things.'"

### THE PARENTS' ROLE

It's important to realize that a child's crush means a great deal to her. "Kids take it seriously," says David Elkind, Ph.D., professor of child development at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, and the author of more than ten parenting books. "Try to treat the crush as something real. The worst thing you can do is ridicule the child."

So how should you handle it? Experts offer these suggestions:

■ Listen in a warm but neutral way when your child talks about her feelings.

### Love Letters

Crushes are a natural subject for young-adult fiction. Your school-age child will probably identify with the characters in these books:

*Bingo Brown, Gypsy Lover* (and other *Bingo Brown* books) by Betsy Byars (Viking Children's Books).

*Just as Long as We're Together* by Judy Blume (Orchard Books).

*Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe* by Bette Greene (Dell).

■ Be careful not to tease your child, or push him into acting on his feelings.

■ Allow your child's crush to remain a vivid fantasy for her—emotionally real, yes, but not necessarily the first step on the road to "going steady."

Perhaps the most surprising thing you will discover is how completely most youngsters erase all memories of an infatuation once it's over. The beauty of childhood crushes is that they're like shooting stars: burning intensely one moment, vanishing the

next, as quickly as they appeared. ■

Lucy Emerson Sullivan is a freelance writer living in Atlanta.

## Not Just Baby Fat



The preschool years are the best time to teach your child healthy eating habits.

**A**RE TODAY'S KIDS OVERWEIGHT? The latest statistics are startling: One in three children over the age of five has a body-fat level that would be considered obese in an adult, according to the United States Department of Agriculture's Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. And in the last two decades the number of overweight children and adolescents has more than doubled. What's more, there is considerable evidence that overweight kids become overweight adults.

Fortunately, parents can do a lot to help their children establish and maintain a healthy weight. In fact, the best time to intervene is during the preschool years,

when you can still influence what your child eats, says Rebecca Unger, M.D., assistant professor of clinical pediatrics at Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago.

### WHY KIDS GAIN WEIGHT

Experts emphasize that parents should not concern themselves with a baby's chubbiness or curtail a child's fat or cholesterol intake from birth to age two, a period of rapid growth during which nutritional needs are high. But after age two, fat should only be 30 percent of a child's daily intake, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Children are considered obese when they're at least 25 percent heavier than the ideal weight for their age and height. There's evidence that although obesity is genetic, what a child inherits is not a particular

weight but a body type, which can be strongly shaped by his eating habits. "In addition to providing healthy, low-fat meals, parents have to set a good example," notes Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D., executive director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest in Washington, D.C., and the coauthor of *What Are We Feeding Our Kids?* (Workman). "If a father is eating pizza and drinking soda, that's what his child will want."

To tip the scales in your child's favor, Dr. Unger advises using skim or one-percent milk instead of whole milk. Also:

**Forget the clean-plate policy.** In general, young children meet their caloric needs over the course of a day. Parents only need to provide healthy choices, and let their child decide how much food is right for her.

**Exercise.** Join your youngster in physical activities like hide-and-seek or catch.

**Keep healthy food options available.** Providing a variety of foods may lessen the likelihood that your child will be drawn to a single food that may be high in calories and low on nutrition. Preschoolers strongly prefer foods that are familiar, so they'll tend to reject new additions to their diet. You may have to present an unfamiliar food to a child up to ten times before she'll bite. So don't be discouraged—keep trying.

**Eat together as a family.** With today's hectic lifestyles, sitting down to a family meal isn't easy. But try to do so a few times a week. You'll not only stand a better chance of feeding your children a balanced diet, but you'll also help show them that eating is a pleasurable social activity.

**Turn off the TV during mealtimes.** Zoning out in front of a television during meals is more than a bad habit; it is also easier to overeat when you're paying attention to a sitcom instead of your meal. Additionally, limit viewing to one to two hours per day, and monitor snacks, advises the American Academy of Pediatrics.

**Avoid nonnutritious breakfast foods.** Instead, serve hot cereals, low-sugar whole-grain cereals with fruit, whole-grain muffins, or low-fat yogurt. If your child is over age two, give her low-fat milk rather than calorie-dense juice.

And don't forget to join in the move toward eating right. "Being a good role model is important," says Dr. Jacobson. "Seeing Mom or Dad enjoying that salad or baked potato or big, juicy peach is a major incentive for your child liking it, too." ■

*Michele Wolf writes frequently on health and parenting topics from her home in New York City.*



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How children's games help them grow  
**THROUGH THE YEARS**  
EDITED BY KATHERINE ROSS

**A GUIDE TO  
DEVELOPMENT**

**58 BIRTH TO TWO**  
by James M. Herzog, M.D.

**60 TWO TO FIVE**  
by Charles Flatter, Ed.D.

**62 SIX TO ELEVEN**  
by Phyllis Tyson, Ph.D.

# Play



Kids just want to have fun! But play also serves an important function in their development. Starting with that first game of peekaboo, infants use simple games to make sense of their world. Preschoolers use role-playing and fantasy games to help define themselves and explore their feelings. And the increasingly structured play of school-age kids reflects their advancing organizational skills and teaches them how to get along with peers. ►

## Birth to Two

BY JAMES M. HERZOG, M.D.

**E**VEN BEFORE BABIES ARE born, they know how to play. Using ultrasound, you can actually see a baby in utero sucking her thumb or playing with her toes. By the time the baby is born, her playing skills are already well established. You might even say that she comes into the world looking for a game.

that as a baby plays with her fingers and toes, she treats them not as parts of her body but as objects that are separate from her. So when she experiences a soothing sensation on the roof of her mouth as her thumb caresses it, for instance, she may think it is the thumb—not her—that is creating the good feeling. In her

himself, and he's ready for more challenging play. Now other people—and the more complicated games they offer him—take on great interest. He enters into play relationships with others: his parents, an older sibling, or a caregiver.

Parents seem to know intuitively when their baby is ready to play with them. And the baby seems

to know how to engage each parent differently in order to satisfy his various needs and expand his play repertoire. Research into parent-infant interactions has shown that women and men often have quite different styles of play.

In general, a mother is likely to adjust her mood to match

the baby's, and will play familiar games, such as patty-cake and peekaboo, at the baby's level of intensity. A father is likely to do the opposite; he will physically stimulate the baby and get the infant to shift his mood and play to

match the father's level of intensity and excitement.

I don't mean that fathers can't be low-

key and calm with their babies or that mothers can't be keyed up and intense; obviously, personal styles vary. I'm describing the general patterns of behavior among parents, which do appear to differ according to gender. It's also true—but, again, there are many exceptions—that boys tend to enjoy rough-and-tumble play, whereas many girls opt for quieter kinds of interaction.

Whatever your style, remember that boys and girls need exposure to *both* types to develop fully. In this way they learn about the many aspects of themselves and the world around them.

Also through play, babies interact with other people, not out of need (because their survival is at stake) but out of desire, simply because they want to, because it gives them pleasure to do so. ▶

*Dr. James M. Herzog is senior scholar in child psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and a practicing child and adult psychiatrist.*



A game of peekaboo is more than mere child's play: It's an important developmental milestone for babies.

### BABIES AT PLAY

What is the difference between play and other kinds of inborn behavior? Rooting for the mother's breast or turning toward the sound of the female voice are obviously meant to ensure physical survival. But play's main purpose for a baby is to give pleasure.

The newborn's "games" are quite primitive. You'll notice

experience, the thumb has played with her, as if it were a being in its own right that she can summon up at will.

### WILL YOU PLAY WITH ME?

An important landmark occurs between the baby's third and sixth months. At this point, he understands that the parts of his body are not separate from

A newborn may play with his fingers and toes, without necessarily being aware that they are a part of him.

A baby doesn't play interactively with her parents until she is between three and six months old. These more complicated games help her develop the basic play skills she was born with.

Fathers often play with babies in a way that excites them, while mothers may prefer a more low-key approach. Whatever your style of play, remember that girls and boys need exposure to both types to develop fully.





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The electrolyte replenisher kids like.



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## The one for kids under four.

## Six to Eleven

BY PHYLLIS TYSON, PH.D.

**A**S CHILDREN GET OLDER, they become increasingly interested in games that have well-defined rules. There's a good reason for this. When youngsters play these kinds of games, they are honing their organizational and thinking skills. Consider the amount of planning that goes into setting up a softball game. And in a board game, a smart player must plan strategies and anticipate his opponent's next move.

### PLAYING BY THE RULES

Through these games children are also developing a capacity for self-control and moral behavior. For instance, a child learns through play that being competitive is good, but that being *too* competitive may have unpleasant results. Overly competitive or aggressive children may have a hard time getting along with their peers or may be excluded from games. A child also learns that winning by any means, even cheating, isn't worth it. His peers will disapprove, so he controls his impulses and chooses to play by the rules.

The child learns through play about his responsibilities toward others. By nine years of age he knows that he owes it to his teammates, not just to himself, to play his best. If he doesn't, he will let them down and his side may lose, and he will feel guilty. All of these are crucial lessons that a child will take with him into adulthood.

### LIFE DRAMAS

Kids this age also use games of fantasy and make-believe to make sense of and resolve important issues. These kinds of games help children reconcile the two realms of their experience—the world of emotions and the world of external reality. They may engage in dramatic play, in which angry and aggressive feelings are acted out and resolved. A boy who is angry at his father may use his action figures to pretend that a tyrant king is overthrown by a young knight; a girl whose teenage sister belittles her may pretend with her dolls that a beautiful princess (her sister) has been locked away in a tower. Through fantasy, a child can make anything happen, no



Organized sports teach school-age children how to play by the rules.

matter how improbable.

Parents are sometimes upset when their children's games of make-believe reflect stereotypical gender roles. Despite their parents' best efforts to the contrary, many boys, for example, still play games that stress physical strength, mastery, and competitiveness.

But keep in mind that although these activities seem to be expressing concerns such as, Am I bigger than you? or Am I stronger?, on a deeper level, the child is grappling with self-esteem. The physically competitive boy is really trying to resolve the crucial questions, How much am I worth? and Am I good enough?

Girls' typical play also has deeper meanings. On the face of it, the play often focuses on physical appearance, clothes, jewelry, and makeup. But as with boys, the real issue here is self-esteem.

Parents shouldn't be alarmed by this stereotypical behavior. (Nor should they worry when their children don't typecast themselves by

sex; this is neither uncommon nor a sign of trouble.) When parents encourage girls and boys to explore all aspects of themselves, and the full range of possibilities that are open to them, stereotyped play won't define their behavior as adults or shape their choices later on.

Since play is something that children are naturally good at, there's rarely any cause for concern. Of course, there are times when intervention is called for, such as when a child doesn't play or uses games in a rote or uncreative way (indicating that her inner world is too troublesome), when she plays in ways that are destructive to others, or when she constantly withdraws into a fantasy world. Most of the time, though, play is not an escape from inner or outer reality, but a pleasurable way of balancing the two. ■

### KEEP IN MIND

- If your child's games involve stereotypical gender roles, don't be overly concerned. Through these games, kids grapple with important issues of self-esteem. Just be sure to encourage both boys and girls to explore all the different aspects of themselves.
- An overly competitive school-age child may be excluded from games by his peers; help him modify his behavior by discussing the importance of playing by the rules and acting responsibly.

*Dr. Phyllis Tyson is associate clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of California at San Diego and is in private practice in La Jolla.*



# MOST PARENTS OF BED WETTERS THINK THERE IS VERY LITTLE THEY CAN DO TO HELP.

Some 3 million children, 10% of all kids between 5 and 10, wet the bed twice a week or more. If your child is in school, chances are at least two of his classmates are in the same leaky boat. No child should ever feel alone with this problem. But, of course, they do.

The good news: More is known than ever before that can help. Once, the only sure cure was time. 99.9% of our children leave this problem in the dust as they grow. And now there are some ways you can give time a hand.

## THE BEST BEGINNING

For starters, pediatricians know a lot more about the causes of "enuresis" (that's the official medical name for it) than they used to.

Doctors today deal with this problem all the time. They have new techniques and sometimes medicines that can help manage bed-wetting, if not eliminate it altogether.

Another advance since *we* were kids: Disposable, absorbent underpants are now made for larger children, 45 to 85+ pounds. By helping our children sleep dry, these pants take a lot of the "mess and stress" out of bed-wetting. Especially for the kids themselves.

## TOMORROW CAN BE DIFFERENT

Thousands of families like yours now count on these disposable underpants, created by the makers of Pull-Ups® training pants.

Pull-Ups® GoodNites® absorbent underpants eliminate the rubber sheets and the laundry and much of the stress that make nighttime accidents into a bigger deal than they really are, and make our children feel small. Smaller than they really are.

GoodNites look a lot like plain white underpants, except slightly thicker. They come in two sizes and even have a label in the back. The trim fit helps GoodNites underpants vanish discreetly under pajamas, while the super absorbent middle

is ready, just in case. In every detail, the GoodNites people have done everything possible to make these absorbent underpants respect our kids like the grown-ups they soon will be.

## THE WAY THINGS SHOULD BE

If GoodNites underpants are new to you, now is the time to try them. You will rejoice that you did. Thousands more families every month are having success with GoodNites.

GoodNites are not a miracle, but there's nothing else like them. They help families keep bed-wetting in perspective. They help make dry mornings, in crisp clean sheets, routine. And make sleep-overs and other normal, healthy everyday kid things routine, too. The way they should be.

## THESE BOOKLETS REALLY HELP

*GoodNites underpants were developed with the help of pediatricians and other childhood specialists. You'll find much of their good advice in these little booklets. There's one for parents, and one to help your child be part of the solution, too. For copies, please send \$1 for postage and handling to: GoodNites Guides, P.O. Box 1165, Maple Plain, MN 55592.*



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## A Sweet Feast



A dessert with heart makes a grand finale to a special meal.

### MENU

APRICOT CHICKEN  
WITH SWEET  
BUTTERNUT SQUASH

PEARL PILAF

LEMON-PEPPER  
CELERY HEARTS

RASPBERRY  
LOVE POTION

FROSTED COCOA  
HEART CAKES

STRAWBERRY SWIRL  
PUDDINGS

### APRICOT CHICKEN WITH SWEET BUTTERNUT SQUASH

PREPARATION TIME: 15 MINUTES

COOKING TIME: 45 MINUTES

SERVINGS: 4

Gather all your valentines around the table for a delicious family meal. There's no need for adult and kid versions of this month's entree—it's so sweet and tasty, your child will love it as is!

- ½ cup apricot jam
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 tablespoon reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 large butternut squash (about 2 pounds), peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 1¼ pounds)

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F. In a small saucepan, heat jam, orange juice, soy sauce, sugar, salt, and pepper until just simmering, stirring constantly until well mixed.
2. In a large mixing bowl, toss





## RECIPE d'ITALIA



**IN ITALY, REFRIGERATORS ARE MUCH SMALLER THAN OURS. OF COURSE, THEY NEVER HAVE LEFTOVERS.**



*Quite the classic, this Ragú Old World Style®. The smooth, mild sort, as sauces go. Gently seasoned. Never too sweet. Like a traditional Italian sauce was meant to be. Why not put a taste of the Old World into your world?*

### Simmered Tuscan Chicken

1 pound boneless chicken breasts,  
cut into 1" cubes  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
4 medium potatoes, cut into ½"  
cubes (about 4 cups)  
1 medium red bell pepper, diced  
1 jar (27.7 oz.) Ragú Old World Style®  
Pasta Sauce  
1 pound fresh or frozen cut green beans  
1 teaspoon dried basil  
Salt and pepper to taste

In a 12" skillet, sauté chicken and garlic in olive oil until chicken is lightly browned. Add potatoes and peppers; continue to cook about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add sauce, basil, green beans, salt and pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; cover and simmer for 35 minutes or until chicken is thoroughly cooked and potatoes are tender. Stir occasionally. Cooking time: 40 minutes. Serves 6.



**RAGÚ OLD WORLD STYLE**



squash with half of the jam mixture. Roast squash in a 11" x 13" nonstick pan for 25 minutes. In a medium bowl, mix chicken breast halves with remaining jam mixture and refrigerate.

3. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water to roasting pan. Place chicken mixture on top of squash. Roast 20 minutes more or until chicken is cooked through. Serve hot.

**Nutritional information per serving:**  
358 cal, 2 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 5% cal from fat, 35 g protein, 53 g carbohydrates, 402 mg sodium, 82 mg cholesterol

### PEARL PILAF

PREPARATION TIME: 10 MINUTES  
COOKING TIME: 50 MINUTES  
SERVINGS: 4

This lightly toasted pearl barley goes beautifully with chicken. Kids like it, and it's a refreshing change from pasta and rice side dishes.

- 2 teaspoons canola oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 1 cup medium pearl barley
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 can (14 $\frac{3}{4}$  ounces) reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup water

1. In a medium saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and carrot and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables begin to soften, about 3 minutes.  
2. Mix in barley and stir until lightly browned and toasted, about 2–3 minutes. Stir in thyme, salt, pepper, broth, and water and bring to a boil. Simmer covered for 45 minutes or until barley is tender. Fluff with a fork and serve.

**Nutritional information per serving:**  
234 cal, 3 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 11% cal from fat, 7 g protein, 45 g carbohydrates, 814 mg sodium, 0 mg cholesterol

### LEMON-PEPPER CELERY HEARTS

PREPARATION TIME: 5 MINUTES  
SERVINGS: 4

The celery heart (the inner, pale yellow stalks) is the most delectable part of the vegetable. It's the perfect complement to your Valentine's Day meal.

- 2 bunches celery
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Pinch of salt
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Remove outer branches of celery until you reach the heart. (Reserve branches for another use—celery soup, for instance.) Separate inner stalks and arrange on a serving plate. Combine lemon juice, oil, salt, and pepper in a jar with a tightly sealed lid. Shake well and drizzle over celery.

**Nutritional information per serving:**  
39 cal, 2 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 52% cal from fat, 1 g protein, 4 g carbohydrates, 132 mg sodium, 0 mg cholesterol

### RASPBERRY LOVE POTION

PREPARATION TIME: 10 MINUTES, PLUS  
2 HOURS FREEZING TIME  
SERVINGS: 4

The idea of a love potion will make the kids giggle. Try these pretty drinks with dinner.

- 1 cup fresh or frozen raspberries
- 4 cups cranberry-raspberry or cranberry juice
- 4 cups unflavored sparkling water
- 4 lime wedges

1. Place a raspberry in each section of two ice-cube trays. Fill the trays with water and freeze until solid, about 2 hours.

2. Fill 4 glasses with the ice cubes and pour equal amounts of cranberry-raspberry juice and sparkling water in each glass. Add a lime wedge and serve.

**Nutritional information per serving:**  
163 cal, 0 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 2% cal from fat, 1 g protein, 41 g carbohydrates, 8 mg sodium, 0 mg cholesterol

### FROSTED COCOA HEART CAKES

PREPARATION TIME: 20 MINUTES  
COOKING TIME: 20 MINUTES  
SERVINGS: 6 CAKES

Make these cakes in heart-shaped muffin tins (available at housewares stores). If you can't find the tins, use a regular  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin pan instead.

Melted butter, for greasing tins  
Flour, for coating tins

- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 egg white, at room temperature
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Cocoa Ricotta Frosting (See recipe below.)

Red Hots cinnamon candies (optional)

White decorating icing (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. With a paper towel or brush, grease the muffin tins with butter, then coat with flour. Hold tins upside down and tap out excess flour.  
2. In a medium bowl, sift together  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup flour and cocoa and set aside.  
3. With an electric mixer set on medium speed, beat eggs and egg white until frothy, about 1 minute. Slowly add in sugar and salt, and continue to beat until eggs are thick and almost white in color, about 3 minutes. Mix in vanilla. Add cocoa mixture in three steps, beating each time just



until mixture is combined. Spoon batter into tins and bake 20 minutes or until tops spring back when touched.

4. Cool cakes in tins on a rack for 5 minutes, then loosen edges of cakes with a sharp knife. Turn tins upside down to remove cakes, and let them cool completely before icing with Cocoa Ricotta Frosting (see recipe below) and finishing with Red Hots and white decorating icing.

## STRAWBERRY SWIRL PUDDINGS

PREPARATION TIME: 20 MINUTES

COOKING TIME: 20 MINUTES

SERVINGS: 4

These very-berry puddings taste as scrumptious as they look. Whip them up as treats for your sweethearts any time of the year.



All that's missing is the frosting on the cake. The recipe below is a good finishing touch.

## COCOA RICOTTA FROSTING

PREPARATION TIME: 5 MINUTES

- 1 cup part-skim ricotta cheese
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 4 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
- 4 tablespoons confectioners' sugar

In a food processor or blender, combine all ingredients and process until smooth. Spread over Cocoa Heart Cakes.

**Nutritional information per serving (Cocoa Heart Cakes With Cocoa Ricotta Frosting):** 251 cal, 7 g fat, 4 g saturated fat, 25% cal from fat, 9 g protein, 40 g carbohydrates, 186 mg sodium, 87 mg cholesterol

- ¼ cup, plus 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- ½ cup, plus 1 tablespoon sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 2½ cups low-fat (2%) milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 cups frozen strawberries, partially thawed and chopped

1. In a heavy bottomed saucepan (or a double boiler), combine ¼ cup cornstarch, ½ cup sugar, and salt. Slowly whisk in milk and place over medium heat, stirring frequently. Cook until mixture comes to a boil. Reduce heat to low and cook 5 minutes longer or until starchy taste has disappeared, stirring frequently. Stir in vanilla and set aside.

2. In a small saucepan, whisk together remaining tablespoons cornstarch and sugar. Stir in strawberries and place over high heat. Bring mixture to a boil, stirring until strawberries thaw thoroughly and become a rough puree.

3. Spoon a scant tablespoon berry puree into a clear wine glass and top with ¼ cup pudding. Repeat twice. Swirl a knife through the glass, pulling it up toward the rim so puree swirls through the pudding. Fill three more wine glasses, alternating the puree and pudding. Serve warm or refrigerate until cold, about one hour.

**Nutritional information per serving:** 257 cal, 3 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 10% cal from fat, 5 g protein, 52 g carbohydrates, 112 mg sodium, 12 mg cholesterol

Jean Galton is a coauthor of 365 Great Soups and Stews (HarperCollins).



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# Getting to the heart of the father-daughter bond

## PERSONALLY SPEAKING

BY ANTHONY ROBINS



Anthony Robins with Nina and Lucy, his partners in magic and gymnastics.

### Daddy's Girls



KNOW THAT MY FIRST daughter was going to be a boy. No need for a sonogram or folk predictions. It was simple: I'd been a boy myself. I imagined the thrill of playing catch with my son—pretty funny since I'd never much liked playing catch before. But that's what fathers do with sons, isn't it?

I'll never know, because I am the proud and happy father of two daughters. And, in fact, I occasionally play catch with them. (It's a pastime that's a lot more fun than I remember from my own childhood.) But there's more to it than that. I've also discovered there's a special bond between a father and his girls.

How did this special connection happen? Well, to be frank, I'm not sure. When my daughters arrived, I just didn't have much time to think about it. But I suppose everything I did made it happen. I took care of them. I held them in my arms. I gave them little plastic bottles of sterile water to drink from. I smiled at them and made silly faces. I changed their diapers. A lot. In my experience, quantity time beats quality time hands down. Carrying my two-year-old daughter to nursery school every morning on my shoulders—now that's a bond that has time to set.

When my daughters reached preschool age, our relationship moved to a new level. With Nina, my older daughter, it was magic that did the trick. When her third-birthday party came along, I hunted up my childhood magic set and put together a show. She fell in love with one particular trick in which a little blue ball travels mysteriously between its yellow case and Daddy's pocket. In her sweet three-year-old voice, she mimicked my line: "Little blue ball, little blue ball, jump from here to there! One, two, three!"

When she turned six, she asked that as a special birthday present I teach her how to do the trick. So I started working with her on tricks from a book of magic for children I'd had as a boy. She reported back to me on magic acts she saw at other kids' birthday parties. She did magic for her friends. I took her with me to magic shows. You might say we developed a professional relationship.

My younger daughter, Lucy, and I have a different kind of relationship. She has always considered me her personal playmate. We play horsey and scary ghost and other games that might seem pretty silly. But our special routine is "let's pretend Daddy is a jungle gym." Today, at ten years old, she is a skilled gymnast, with one eye on the Olympics and the other on climbing Mount Everest (oh, a parent's skittish heart!). Both when she was a toddler and now, Lucy has practiced by walking up to me and saying "Daddy, hold my hands tight—no, Daddy, you know what I mean," and then pulling herself up, doing a double back-over flip (her own invention), and clambering onto my shoulders. (Come to think of it, this may also be a professional relationship.)

Are there differences between sons and daughters? Must be. Are they serious? I don't know. Girls play different games than boys do. I remember as a child being mystified by jacks, something that all girls played, but that no boy I ever met could figure out. Well, now I know how to play jacks, and I'm pretty good at it, too: from onesies and twosies, right up to specials.

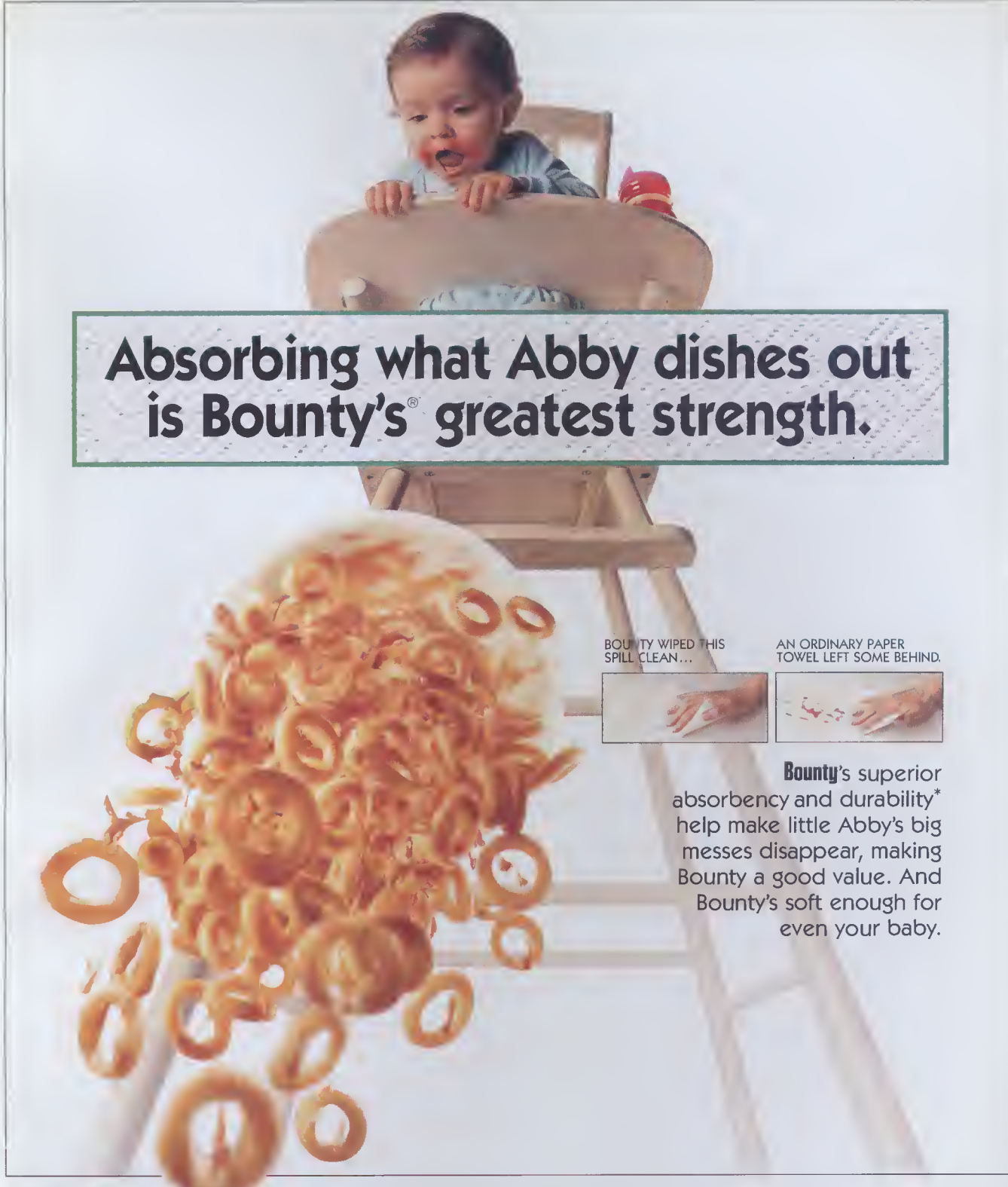
Sometimes, if I ask about conversations my daughters are having with Mommy, I get only a smile and "Daddy! It's girl talk!" That's when I get a twinge, and wonder what it would be like to have a son—the same way women I know who have sons wonder about how it would be to have daughters.

But for me, "kids" means "girls."

And I just can't imagine having any other kind. ■

*Anthony Robins is a writer, a lecturer, a historian, and, most notably, the father of two daughters. He lives in New York City.*





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